







DEVOTIONS FOR CONFESSION AND HOLY COMMUNION.

[The Copyright is reserved.]

3455 aa.45.





Digitized by Google

Devations

FOR

CONFESSION

AND

HOLY COMMUNION.

BY

THE REV. JOHN O'HANLON.

"Let the greatness of your grief equal the enormity of your sins."—St. Cyprian.

"The true bread was not given us by Moses, but by our Lord Jesus, who is Himself the feast and the guest, who Himself eateth and is eaten."

St. Jerome.

LONDON:

THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON, 26, PATERNOSTER BOW; 9, CAPEL STREET, DUBLIN; AND DERBY. 1866.



Medication.

TO THE VERY REVEREND

MONSIGNORE WILLIAM MEAGHER, D. D.,
P. P. of rathmines parish,

AND

v. g. of the archdiocese of dublin, as an humble,

YET A GRATEFUL AND AN AFFECTIONATE
TRIBUTE OF SPECIAL REGARD
FOR HIS

TALENTS, LEARNING, AND ACQUIREMENTS, OF TRUE ESTEEM FOR HIS

AMIABLE DISPOSITION AND CHARACTER, COMBINED WITH A

JUST VENERATION FOR HIS MANY STERLING, UNOBTRUSIVE,

ADMIRED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND VIRTUES,

THIS

LITTLE VOLUME
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

This work is designed, to provide persons who are desirous of approaching the two great Sacraments which Catholics most generally receive, with a complete manual of instruction and prayer adapted to general and particular requirements. The devotions contained in it are compiled or composed, after the manner of our most approved authors. Many of them are taken from works of the Holy Fathers, or from those of well known Catholic writers, and divines. The prayers are duly arranged, with suitable instructions, in reference to their immediate subjects.

Hardly any duty of greater importance is exacted by our Holy religion, than to receive with necessary dispositions the Sacraments of Penance and of the Blessed Eucharist. Christians thoroughly acquainted with their nature and effects ought surely prepare for receiving them in a suitable and devout manner. By a full participation of their graces, they must possess an inestimable treasure. They

would then be cleansed from all stains, that may have been contracted since the forfeiture of their baptismal innocence. It is equally certain, that if persons who go to Confession and Communion have not proper dispositions, they shall not only be guilty as before receiving, but they must add additional guilt to former crimes by approaching unworthily these most

important Sacraments.

Prayer is of all other efficacious means one of the most powerful to obtain God's grace. Christ Himself assures us, that whatsoever we ask devoutly of Him shall be given to us. By prayer, Joshua obtained a great victory over the Amalekites, and whenever through fatigue the hands of Moses were allowed to fall, the tide of battle turned against the Israelites, whilst their enemies' power prevailed. Joshua also by his prayers caused the sun to stand in the middle of its diurnal course. By prayer, Elias caused fire to descend from Heaven to consume his sacrifice. poor publican, after his humble petition, returned justified from the temple; whilst the proud pharisee, standing ostenta-tiously, as he did not pray in the like

spirit of humility, went away unrewarded, because he presumptuously exalted himself. God has regard to the prayer of an humble person, but the petition of a proud man shall be rejected. The Almighty bestows His choicest blessings upon those, who earnestly and fervently importune Him.

But if there be any means equally available and necessary towards obtaining the grace of God, we must surely regard a proper preparation for and reception of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, as objects of paramount importance. If we frequent these Holy Sacraments duly instructed and with devotion, our spiritual advantage will be exceeding great; but if we ignorantly or negligently prepare our-selves for such duties, little improvement need be anticipated. When we perceive an amendment in our lives and a general reformation in our morals, every such indication leads us to hope, that our Confessions and communions are acceptable in the sight of God. Yet it is a deplorable fact, that several approach without neces-sary instruction or preparation, even when induced to frequent these Sacraments.

They may resort to the tribunal of confession, and spend little or no time in the requisite examination of their consciences. With their lips they often profess sorrow for sin, whilst it may be doubted, if this contrition proceed from their heart. In like manner, by unworthy communions, instead of devoutly receiving the Blessed Eucharist, as St. Paul observes, (1 Cor. xi. 29,) they eat and drink judgment to themselves, not discerning the body of the Lord. Hence, need we wonder to find people who have been oftentimes at Communion continuing still in their evil dispositions, and offending God frequently, as if they had not tasted this life-giving food?

In order to impress those, who are desirous of approaching these two great Sacraments, with a clearer idea of their importance and efficacy, several short but necessary observations have been prefixed to special devotions, or will be seen interspersed in the pages of this book. A table of sins, to help one in the examination of conscience has been carefully compiled. Suitable prayers and devotions will be found useful for particular purposes, according to the various states or

conditions of penitents or communicants, and they are arranged with reference to a difference of capacity, spiritual acquire-

ments and progress.

The pious Acts which follow have been distributed in sections, to serve as time or opportunity may allow, for select devotional reading or meditation, either before or after the reception of Confession or Holy Communion. It is to be hoped, for purposes of General Confessions, or for Spiritual Retreats and Missions, that all the preliminary instructions and principles which concern our religious and moral requirements will be rendered sufficiently intelligible and useful, in arriving at a just knowledge regarding the state of our in-The duties and special engageterior. ments of various classes have been added, to afford greater facility for instituting a particular Examination of Conscience. and for understanding the exact nature of our several Christian obligations.

St. Michael's and St. John's Church, Dublin, October, 1866.

CONTENTS.

PART I .- DEVOTIONS FOR CONFESSION.

					PA	GE.
General	Instructions		ng the	Sacramet	it of	
	Penar	ce	•••	•••	•••	1
SEC	r. I.—Institu	tion and	object	of this S	acra-	
	ment	•••	•••	•••	•••	1
SEC	T. II.—Parts	of this S	acrame	at—Contri	tion	12
	T. III.—Conf				•••	18
	r. IV.—Satisf					23
	T. V.—Advan		Freque	nt Confess	ion	30
	r. VI.—Obsta					
240	Confession	.0105 00,			,	35
SEC	T. VII.—The	Practic	a of G	and Wark	ra in	•••
51.0	connexion w			004 11012		42
A Decem	r before the H			'anasianaa		46
		Yamme	TOTI OF C	опестепсе	•••	48
	-Prayer	•••	•••	•••	•••	50
	-Prayer		•••	•••	•••	
	iminary Dire		.4:4	G	•••	51
	tation before					53
Instructi	ions regardin	g the pr	nciple	of our n	noral	
	s and their	practical	r abbri	ation to	our-	
selves		•••	***	•••	•••	54
	of Sins to 1			y when w	e are	
	to prepare for			•••	•••	62
	Cen Command		f God	•••	•••	63
Firs	t Commandn	ent	•••	•••	•••	63
Sec	ond Command	lment	•••	•••	•••	76
Thi	rd Commandi	ment	•••	•••	•••	78
Fou	rth Command	lment	•••	***	•••	81
	h Commandn		***	•••		86
	h and Ninth		dments			89

	CONT	ENTS.			XIII
•				F	AGE
Seventh and Ten		mandment	s	•••	98
Eighth Command	lment	•••	•••		100
On the Seven Capital		dly Sins	•••	•••	104
I.—Pride	•••	•••	•••		104
II.—Covetousnes	8	•••	•••	•••	107
III.—Lust or Lu	xury	•••	•••	•••	109
IV.—Anger		•••	•••		109
V.—Gluttony	•••	•••	•••	••	110
VI.—Envy	•••	•••	•••	•••	112
VII.—Sloth	•••	•••	•••		118
The Six Precepts of t	he Chu	rch	•••	•••	116
First Precept	•••	•••	•••	•••	116
Second Precept	•-•	•••	•••	•••	117
Third Precept	•••	•••	•••	•••	120
Fourth Precept	•••	•••	••.	•••	120
Fifth Precept	•••	•••	•••	•••	121
Sixth Precept		•••	•••	•••	122
Obligations of Differe	nt State	es in Life	•••	•••	130
Duties of Pare			or Superi	ors.	
especially towa	rds chi	ldren			130
Duties of Childre			endants	•••	136
Duties of Brother			•••		189
Mutual Duties of			le	•••	
Special Duties of			•••	•••	144
Special Duties of	Wife	•••	•••		
Duties of Govern					
lords, Agents,	Magistr	ates or Off	cials		147
Duties of Master					154
Duties of Mercha					
and Traders	•••		.,	•••	156
Duties of Trad		Servants.	Clerks		
Apprentices					159
Duties of Advoca			•••		161
Duties of Physici					163
Duties of Teacher			•••		167
Duties of Schola			•••	•••	170
Duties of Doorke					•••
Members belo	nging	to Religi	ons Con	fra-	
ternities					171
Duties of Cated	hists.	Choristers	. Organi		
Sacristans and				,	172
			• • • •		

			PAG
Duties of the Clergy	•••	•••	17
Duties of Religious	***	•••	18
The Nine Ways by which	we may !	be accesse	ry to
the Sins of another		•••	· 19
A Prayer after the Examina	tion of Co	nscience	19
Prayer before Confession		•••	19
Ejaculations which may	be freque	ently repo	ated
before Confession			20
Acts before Confession	•••		21
An Act of Contrition	•••	•••	21
An Act of Faith	•••	•••	22
An Act of Adoration	•••	•••	23
An Act of Hope	•••	•••	24
An Act of Charity		•••	26
An Act of Humility	•••	•••	27
Fervent Aspirations which	may be	repeated o	
before Confession			, 28
A Prayer before we enter the	e Confessi	onal	28
Instructions to be observed			28
After Confession	•••		29
Prayers after receiving Abso		•••	29
A Prayer to be said after Co	nfession.		
left the Confessional			290
A Prayer to be said after C			
lution has been deferred	•••		297
Prayers after Confession	•••	•••	299
Acts after Confession	***	•••	310
An Act of Resignation	•••	•••	316
An Act of Thanksgiving		•••	323
An Act of Fear	•••	•••	326
An Act of Praise	•••	•••	330
Prayers to the Blessed Virg			
0.7	en man	una 60 an	332
A Prayer to our Special Pa	atron and	to that S	
who is Chief Patron of our			
A Prayer to our Guardian Ar		ia atocese	336
Aspirations after Confession		•••	337
			337
On Indulgences	of a Dlana	ev Indula	
A Prayer to obtain the effects	or w Lieur	n's ringuise	878 876 975

		CONT	FWIP.			XΥ
					1	AGE
Regulations f	or a Chr	iation T	ifa			349
Prayer						349
	••	••	• • •	••		
Rules	••	••	••	••	••	351
			•			
PART II.—	DEVOI	'IONS E	OR HO	LY COM	MUNI	on.
Clamanal Turk			: 4b-			
General Inst the Blessed			mg une			364
			i Objec	t of this		304
			a Objec	o or emis	Datia	364
SECT. II	Disno	nsitions	and I	Preparatio	n for	001
Holy C	ommun	ion				374
SECT. II	I.—Mot	ives to	excite	our de	votion	
before	Holy Co	mmuni	on	••		383
			f Frequ	ent and I)evout	
Comm	unions	••		• •		391
		ctions	on a	Spiritual		
munio		•:	. ••		• •	
Prayers befor	e Sacrar	nental (ommur		• •	
Acts before C			• •	• •	. • •	417
An Act o			• •	••		417
An Act o			• •	••		430
An Act o	f Hope	• •	••	••	••	437
An Act o	f Charit	y			••	444
An Act o	f Humil	ity	••	••		451
An Act o	f Adorat	ion	••			456
A Prayer which	ch may	be repe	ated of	en before	Holy	
Communion	a -		••			461
On the Holy	Sacrifice	of the	Mass			464
Acts of Contr						469
Prayer before	Mass	,	,		• •	471
Prayer before Explanation of	f the Li	turev. C	eremon	ies and O	biects	
seen at Mas	38					474
Prayers for a			t Mass	••		475
Instructions l				on		501
Tion dollors					••	500

CONTENTS.

			P	AGE
Ejaculations after Communion		••		504
After the Communion				505
A Prayer after Mass				510
Prayers which may be repeat	ed ofte	n after	Holy	0.0
Communion	••	••	••	513
Acts after Communion				515
An Act of Resignation				515
An Act of Thanksgiving				528
An Act of Fear	• •			536
An Act of Praise				549
Prayers to the Blessed Virgin a	nd to al	the Sai	inta	553
Prayer to our special Patron, a				-
is chief Patron of our nation				562
Prayer to our Guardian Angel	and and	0080	••	563
	17-	.4.	••	564
On the holy Viaticum and Extr		CHOH	• •	
Prayer before receiving Holy V	iaticum	••		569
A Prayer after Holy Viaticum				573
▲ Resolution of Amendment	and for	Perseve	rance	
in the State of Grace				575

Mebotions for Confession.

PART I.

- GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

SECT. I.—Institution and Object of this Sacrament.

Every well-instructed Catholic must know that the two Sacraments most necessary for us are Baptism and Penance. By means of the first we are cleansed from original sin, which was committed by our first parents, and in which we were conceived. This sin we have inherited from them, and hence, according to the Sacred Scripture, we were born "children of wrath." (Ephes. ii. 3.) If all Christians fully preserved the grace of Baptism, conferred on them by the administration of that Sacrament, it would

not be so essentially necessary, as a means of salvation, for Christ to have instituted the Sacrament of Penance. But, knowing the depravity of human nature, and the infirmity of our corrupt inclinations in yielding to temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, out of His great mercy and compassion for relapsing sinners, Christ Jesus has left to the pastors of His Church a power of absolving those

truly penitent and disposed.

When our Blessed Saviour received from St. Peter an acknowledgment of His Divinity before the Disciples, these following words were addressed to the Prince of the Apostles: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee. that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 17, 18, 19.) These

passages of Sacred Scripture not only establish the supremacy of St. Peter over the other Apostles, he being appointed Head of Christ's Church on earth; but by the metaphor afterwards used, with the power of binding and loosing sin, we are to understand, that our Divine Redeemer promised to give St. Peter authority to open the gates of heaven, which had been closed against the sinner. This is further elucidated by a reference to the prophecies of Isaias, where allusion is made to the key of the House of David being given to Eliacim the son of Helcias. (Isaias xxii. 22.) Obstacles to the sinner's admission being removed, the expression here introduced implies also the faculty of absolving from sin. Again, the power of granting an indul-gence, by loosing the bonds of temporal punishment due to our sins, is likewise very clearly defined. This image of the sinner being a captive in the chains of sin is likewise quite expressive of his servile state. The power of binding and loosing was promised and afterwards imparted to the other Apostles of Christ.

Our Divine Redeemer having appeared

to His disciples, in a miraculous manner, soon after His Resurrection, stood in their midst and said to them: "Peace be to you." He showed them the marks of wounds received by Him, to make them understand that no doubt should be entertained regarding His Divine presence, and that He was about to treat on a matter of the greatest importance. When He had convinced them that He was truly risen from the grave, the Redeemer repeated His former gracious salutation. He then added these words: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you." Here would our Lord Jesus Christ announce the mission, which had been received from His Heavenly Father, and which was to be a warrant of that authority He was about to confer on His disciples. When He had spoken the foregoing words, "He breathed on them; and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." (John xx. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.) Christ breathed on them, that we might understand by such exterior signs, an infusion

of the Holy Spirit, with a Divine power emanating from Himself and communicated to His disciples. The words used by our Redeemer are most plain and simple, and fully express the nature of that power He imparted. It is clearly judicial, when after a just examination of the case, disposition, and intention of sinners, His disciples were empowered to forgive or retain crimes submitted to their cognizance in the sacred tribunal of penance. And the exercise of indulgence or severity when passing judgment is said to be ratified in heaven. This ministerial faculty depends on the Divine mission of Christ, who in His capacity as "Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." (Matthew is, 6.) Here also there is question of preparing His disciples for announcing the gospel to all nations, and preaching repentance and remission of sins, in the name of Jesus Christ. Wherefore, on this account, He instituted the holy Sacrament of Penance.

It is certain the Apostles announced to all their converts a necessity for being regenerated in the saving waters of Baptism, and amongst the first instructions given them, we find in the Apostles' Creed, "the remission of sins" inculcated as an important dogma. In what sense it had been formerly preached and believed becomes manifest, when we examine the writings of the Holy Fathers and the decrees of various councils. Nor will it be requisite to multiply quotations of similar import to those here presented. Speaking of the Greek term "exomolo gesis" (confession) Tertullian remarks: "When, therefore, it prostrates a man it raises him the more; when it makes him squalid, it cleanses him the more; when it accuses, condemns, it absolves." (De Penitentia, cap. ix.) In his book on the lapsed, St. Cyprian exhorts sinners in the following terms: "Let every one of you make an humble and solemn confession of his sin whilst he is yet in the world, whilst his confession can be admitted, whilst his satisfaction and the pardon given him by the priests are available with God." St. Chrysostom, in his tract on the priesthood, says: "Those who live on earth, and who are engaged in its concerns have power to dispense the things of heaven: they have faculties

given which even a bountiful God would not wish to confer on angels nor archangels. For to them it was not said, 'Whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven.' Earthly princes have their power of binding, indeed; yet this is only in reference to the body. But the binding of priests reaches even to the soul, and ascends to the heavens; so that what the priests do below, God ratifies on high; and the Lord confirms the sentence of His servants." (Lib. iii.) St. Ambrose, in his vants." (Lib. 111.) St. Ambrose, in his work on penance, has these observations: "It might seem impossible that sins are forgiven through penance. Christ gave this power to His apostles, and from them it has been transmitted as a priestly duty." (Lib. ii. cap. ii.) St. Augustine also says: "Let no man say to himself, I do penance privately, I do it before God, He knows this who pardons what I do inwardly. Wherefore without reason. do inwardly. Wherefore, without reason has it been said, Whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven? Therefore, without a reason, are keys' given to the Church of God?" (Sermon cccxcii.) And St. Gregory the

Great observes: "The cases must be considered, and then the powers of binding and loosing may be exercised. We must examine what sin hath preceded or what punishment hath followed after the fault: that those whom the Almighty God hath visited by the grace of compunction, may be absolved through a judgment pronounced by the pastor. For then is the absolution of him presiding real when it follows the decision of the Eternal Judge." (Lib. ii. Hom. xxvi. in Evang.) Again, the decrees of various Councils might be produced, confirmatory of the Catholic doctrine on penance, and dating from a very early period to the present Thus, St. Cyprian, writing to Cornelius the Roman Pontiff, relates what had been established in a council by himself and thirty-eight other hishops, regarding the lapsed, or those who had sacrificed to idols. It was decreed, that they should undergo a full course of penance for their sins; but if danger of death was apprehended, penitents were in that case to receive absolution. The very form of absolution amongst the Greeks, although differing from that of the Latin Church, recognizes a power of forgiving sins, granted by Christ to His priests. And from this universally received doctrine of the Catholic Church, all Christians must feel persuaded that such an onerous and a naturally repugnant obligation as that of auricular confession could not have been readily imposed by any human authority. Nor can any one of our adversaries point to the author or period establishing such a practice, subsequent to the time of the apostles. Wherefore, it may most reasonably be presumed, that the duty of confessing our sins to a priest must be referred to the very origin of Christianity, and that the sacrament of penance is of Divine institution.

Next to Baptism, it is more efficacious and needful than any of the other Sacraments. It is almost as necessary for a relapsing sinner who has fallen into mortal sin after Baptism, as the latter Sacrament is requisite for persons who have not been baptized. There is scarcely any duty of greater importance, in the estimation of our holy mother the Church, than to receive this great Sacrament of Penance with the necessary dispositions. Were it not

instituted through the bountiful providence of God, the sinner would inevitably perish. It is compared to a second plank left after shipwreck, to which the sinner can still cling, when wrecked on the dangerous quicksands and rocks of his own evil inclinations and ungovernable passions.

There are many, indeed, who languidly frequent the tribunal of confession, in compliance with established custom, at the time which the Church has appointed. But whilst complying with the paschal precept, too often they do not reflect in a serious manner on that sentence of Sacred Scripture: "Cursed is he who Sacred Scripture: Cursed is ne who doth the work of the Lord negligently." Others again defer their repentance from day to day and from year to year, until they are laid on their deathbed; too frequently presuming that then they can be effectually reconciled to an angry God, This is always a dangerous and often a mistaken notion. It is one by which the devil draws an innumerable multitude of sinners to himself. For to omit various accidents, which daily happen, and the many sudden deaths of which we constantly hear, or that we witness ourselves, can the person who is thus circumstanced fully make his peace with God, or confidently anticipate salvation, when at the point of death? For we know that the devil mostly endeavours at this particular juncture to mislead the dying sinner, by throwing innumerable obstacles in his way, to hinder his conversion, and to estrange him from the one, true, and living God. When the body is racked with pain and sickness, when the soul is tortured with the remorse and indecision of an upbraiding conscience by reflecting on the manner in which a whole life has been misspent, it is exceedingly diffi-cult for the dying man, adequately to ex-plain the enormities and the multitude of his grievous sins before a confessor. At such a time, likewise, his attention is generally turned on the things of this earth; he is considering, perhaps, how he shall provide for his wife, children, or relations; he is lamenting that he has been snatched away from family and friends before his affairs have been arranged to his perfect satisfaction in this world; he is overpowered with grief because he must leave all his worldly prospects and riches; he most reluctantly relinquishes those ambitious thoughts and hopes he formerly entertained of raising himself in position above that of many fellow-creatures. Such is the abhorrent but real picture presented by the unrepenting or forlorn sinner, when about to leave this transient and deceitful life.

Sect. II.—Parts of this Sacrament. Contrition.

In order to understand its nature and render our confession acceptable to God, we must consider that it consists of three distinct parts, namely, Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction. Each one of these three parts comprising the Sacrament of Penance must be treated separately, so that we may form a clear conception of their united effects.

Contrition is a heartfelt and sincere sorrow for past sin, combined with a hatred for it, and a firm resolution of never offending God for the future. It

supposes an effectual change of life. This resolution of amendment must not merely arise from human considerations or even from a servile fear of eternal torments. For although such dispositions may be proper and useful, yet the sinner should always have supernatural motives for his sorrow or compunction. The true penitent should deliberately reflect on the heinousness and odious nature of mortal sin. He must gratefully remember the goodness, the forbearance, and the mercy of God, throughout all the concerns of life, in order to call him to the rewards of eternal happiness. He must firmly re-solve to avoid all occasions of sin, or incentives to its commission. He should form an unalterable determination never more to offend Almighty God. With such dispositions of soul he ought to elicit acts of perfect contrition. When our sorrow, based on the most perfect love of God, is truly intense and sincere, it is known as Contrition. But when weak and less perfect, although sincere, it is called Attrition. In order, therefore, to excite the sinner if possible to an act of perfect contrition, it is requisite. that he should seriously meditate on these considerations following, which will greatly help to increase his sorrow, and furnish his mind with subjects for grave reflection. 1. Let him carefully consider the number and enormity of his sins. 2. The losses he sustains by mortal sin, viz. the loss of grace, a deprivation of virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost, exclusion from the kingdom of heaven, and what is still more dreadful, the outrages and injuries committed against God Himself. who although merciful is nevertheless inflexibly just. 3. Let him consider the majesty and goodness of the Almighty whom he has offended. 4. The insult offered to God in preferring some vile creature to Him. 5. The great hatred God bears to sin, particularly mortal sin. 6. Let the sinner think of death, with all its awful consequences. 7. Let him reflect on the many benefits gratuitously conferred on him by the Almighty. 8. The obvious necessity of satisfying for sin. 9. Let the sinner seriously resolve not to offend God for the future. Let him endeavour to avoid all further occasions of sin.

The object of every penitent should be to attain perfect contrition, or a true and sincere repentance. This must arise from the most disinterested and excellent supernatural motives, founded on charity or the pure love of God, chiefly because of His own infinite perfections. We should be filled with grief for our sins, not regarding so much the punishment they inflict on ourselves, but because we have offended that God who has been most bountiful to us, and whom we should love above all created things. Such disposition of soul, when already attained, justifies a sinner in the sight of God. If involved in the guilt of mortal sin, penitents should endeavour at once to elicit this kind of sorrow. But, as the precept of receiving this Sacrament of Penance is binding on every Christian, when he has attained years of discretion, we are obliged to approach the tribunal of Confession when it is possible, and at the very first convenient opportunity.

Attrition, or imperfect contrition, although resting on supernatural motives, cannot obtain instant remission of sin. It only disposes the soul for pardon

through the Sacrament of Penance. Those motives which make us attend to our soul's interest, by fearing the loss of heaven, God's judgments or the punishment of everlasting pains in hell, joined with an incipient but imperfect love of God, more because we consider His bounties to ourselves, than on account of His own infinite and most amiable perfections, usually induce us to attain attrition. Notwithstanding, it is a virtuous and laudable sorrow, a gift of God, a wholesome fear of His inflexible justice, and when combined with a good confession, and sacerdotal absolution, it procures immediate sanctification.

Our sorrow for sin, and especially for mortal sin, should partake of these qualities. It must be internal, which means that it rest in the heart and mind; not consisting in mere external signs or expressions of regret for our past sins. Tears or sensible emotions may be only the accidents of sorrow, without producing any real change in our interior. The heart should be filled with a sincere, reverential, exalted love of God, and feel a poignant anguish or real regret for the

commission of former offences. The mind should conceive a great horror for sin, which is so diametrically opposed to the will of God, and so subversive of His Divine Law. These dispositions of heart and mind are perfectly reconcilable with a composed demeanour. Our sorrow must be supernatural, which means that it arise, not from merely natural causes, it arise, not from merely natural causes, but that it proceed from the grace of God, and be grounded on a sincere repentance. This disposition is procured by pious reflections on the most moving truths of Divine Faith, and the powerful inducements to love God offered by our holy religion. Were our regret to have its sole origin because sin brought us disease, disgrace, or temporal loss, this would be merely a natural sorrow, which should never find pardon or mercy from the Almighty. Our sorrow should be exceedingly great, that is, it must surpass our regret for all temporal losses. As we are obliged to love God above all created things, so should we regard His displeasure, and the loss of His grace, as our greatest of all evils, and consequently as the most bitter subject for our

regret. Our sorrow must be universal, embracing all our sins without exception; for we can never be said truly to repent so long as we cherish a love for any one mortal sin, even although we detest and renounce all our other vices. An efficacious resolution to avoid sin and a desire to satisfy for past sins are requisite. We should also humbly hope, through God's infinite mercy, to obtain the grace of reconciliation.

SECT. III.—Confession.

Having by such motives excited the mind to perfect contrition, it is necessary, when opportunity serves, that the penitent should make a good confession. Conditions annexed to this duty are, that it be plain, entire, prudent, short, diligent, sincere, humble, simple, and sorrowful. These constitute the chief requisites of a good confession. It must be—1. Plain, by avoiding an account of all unnecessary circumstances, or any obscure words that would tend to lessen or misrepresent the enormity of your various sins, or which would tend to make you less criminal in

the eyes of your confessor, than you really are. Our great object should be to represent the true state of our souls, as God knows us to be guilty. 2. Entire, by enumerating all your sins, as far as possible, by telling them to your confessor, without unnecessary excuses or reservation, together with the number of times you have committed them, so far as you have committed them, so far as memory serves, by stating, if requisite, sacred places where you have been, or holy days and times of peculiar solemnity on which crimes have been perpetrated, without mentioning the name or address of a third person, when a partner is guilty, but only the station in life, or peculiar position. A judicious confessor will best direct the penitent in eliciting all the information requisite. Any scandal you may have given any injury done with every have given, any injury done, with every other circumstance of real importance in defining the nature of sin, will enable your confessor to know with sufficient accuracy the extent and enormity of your offences. No mortal sin should be knowingly concealed. To render confession complete and entire, you must at least state those different mortal sins, of which

you know that you have been guilty; also the number of times you have committed each sin, to the best of your recollection, or the length of time, or intervals of time, during which you have been habituated to the commission of certain sins, when it would not be easy to determine separate acts, as in the case of avarice, pride, &c. Those circumstances must be related which notoriously aggravate the degree of sin, and which may altogether change its nature, as when simple theft is changed into sacrilege, by stealing a sacred vessel from the church, or when the amount of injustice, practised on a neighbour, inflicts lesser or greater loss, in money, goods, or established reputation. You should likewise state whether a sin had been accompanied by special aggravating circumstances of malice and deliberation, or whether it had been perpetrated with a greater or lesser degree of advertence. 3. Prudent, by using no improper expression, or one unjustly prejudicial to other persons, and by delicately, yet, truthfully, confessing impure thoughts, words, deeds, committed by ourselves, such as those sins prohibited by the VI. or IX.

commandments. 4. Short, by avoiding all superfluous words, which would neither explain or define the exact nature of your crime. 5. Diligent, by carefully scrutinizing your conscience before confession, especially regarding the ten commandments of God, the six precepts of the Church, the seven deadly sins, and your strongest passions, on your state of life; but do this without anxiety or too much scrupulousness, whilst aiding your memory by reflecting with method on your various duties, and the chief occasions of your fall, by examining yourself and consulting the table of sins, which follows these instructions. 6. Sincere, by laying open the inmost recesses of soul and conscience, with perfect truthfulness; and by unfolding the secrets of your mind to a director, without any disguise, excuse, equivoca-tion, or mental reservation. You must not seek to lay blame on others for the commission of your sins. 7. Humble, by considering the goodness and mercy of God whom you have offended, with His bounty, from thus instituting this great sacrament for sinners, although so un-worthy to partake of its benefits. All

true Gospel penitents, such as Mary Magdalene, the poor publican, the prodigal son, obtained God's mercy through their remarkable manifestation and possession of humility. Writers of the Sacred Scrip-tures, and even our Divine Redeemer Himself, most frequently inculcated this virtue, as necessary for salvation. The proud pharisee found no favour in the sight of God, owing to the want of this quality, although free from scandalous sins, and otherwise addicted to the exact performance of many laudable duties. Think, then, on your humiliating condition as a sinner, deserving reproach and punishment for your sins, on the duty you are about to discharge, which involves necessarily great humiliation, especially before a God of infinite Majesty, bounty, and sanctity. Without humility your and sanctity. Without humility your confession would be unprofitable and illusory. The sins you have committed were prompted by pride and self-will; they must be repaired by humility and diffidence in your present and future conduct.

8. Simple, by confining yourself to a fair and precise accusation, by not perplexing your confessor with a variety of irrelevant circumstances, or tedious narratives, in which much time is unnecessarily spent, by not wounding the character or reputation of a neighbour, and by not endeavouring to appear less guilty at his expense. Confession has the simplicity required, when we neither wilfully exaggerate nor extenuate our guilt, but stating every fact as it occurs to our minds, doubtful, when really so, and certain, when convinced of its occurrence. 9. Sorrowful, by exciting a sincere sorrow for our sins, which is done by contrition.

SECT. IV.—Satisfaction.

The third part of the Sacrament of Penance is satisfaction. This means an exact performance of the penance imposed by the priest. Besides this, we must labour to conquer every inclination towards relapsing into sins already confessed; if we have injured any, we should make restitution, so far as we are able; if by example, or otherwise, we have given scandal, or occasion to the sins of others, we must endeavour by contrary virtues and opportunities to repair the spiritual

damage done to our neighbour. We must exactly and devoutly recite the prayers or spiritual exercises enjoined, or perform whatever penance our confessor may think advisable to impose on us.

Every person in the sacred tribunal must give special attention to the penance which the priest imposes. If, nevertheless, through any lapse of memory it be forgotten, and if there be a reasonable presumption that the confessor might remember it, the penitent may return and ascertain such penance, whenever it would be convenient or feasible. But if this cannot be done, the penitent ought to recite devoutly such prayers or holy exercises as he may deem more than sufficient to satisfy for his penance, thus somewhat exceeding the usual injunctions or practice, regulating the director's conduct in regard to his case. This, however, is recommended as desirable and ever, is recommended as desirable and compensatory to a certain extent, although it is not of obligation, in the sense that it can fully satisfy for the penitent's omission of what he is particularly bound to recollect. The penitent must remember, that it is never optional with himself to commute

the satisfaction enjoined, even although this change be intended for the performance of a more rigorous or manifestly a more onerous penance. It is solely his director who can commute his own prescription or sentence, as acting in the double capa-city of spiritual physician and judge. If the penitent approach any other confessor, duly authorized to hear confessions, it would be expedient to submit the entire case to his decision in the holy tribunal. The impossibility or practical difficulty involved in the fulfilment of a particular penance, or some other reasonable cause, would be required for effecting such a change. The necessity and mode must be left to the discretion of our confessor. It is not proper for a penitent to inform his companions or others about sins he has revealed, or the penance imposed on him in the tribunal of confession.

The acceptance of this penance and its fulfilment have a necessary connection with the essence and integrity of the sacrament. And if this penance should have been imposed by a confessor, as an atonement for grievous sin committed by his penitent, the latter is bound to per-

form it, under pain of incurring additional mortal sin. According to the more general opinion of divines, when, for the com-mission of venial sins, a suitable penance has been imposed, its neglect would not involve the guilt of mortal sin. However, in all cases, the penitent should endeavour to complete his penance, within the period assigned by his confessor; or at least, so soon as it can be conveniently performed. When we regard such satisfaction, as a complement of this sacrament, and imposed as atonement for mortal sin, it must appear evident, that if it even be protracted, through gross negligence, for any considerable length of time, penitents cannot be excused from the guilt of an additional grievous offence against God. The more common opinion of theologians prevails, that if penance be faithfully performed, even though the penitent be in a state of mortal sin, his work of satisfaction has been fulfilled, and that this state of the sinner's conscience, at the time, cannot involve such a frail being, in any additional mortal guilt. Most probably, however, this reprehensible mode of performance exposes such a relapsing person to the commission of venial sin.

The fulfilment of penance is not strictly obligatory, in the case of a bad or sacrilegious confession, because the absolution already imparted had been null, and by the fulfilment of penance, it is evident the impiety perpetrated cannot be repaired. Besides, in that case, a double satisfaction would have to be undergone, for the same sin or sins, already committed, a part of which penance must be considered inefficacious and unnecessary. The same observations apply to penance imposed before absolution has been given; except in those cases where the satisfaction required is intended for spiritual medicinal correction and desirable for special reasons, or when it may be safely presumed that the confessor wishes his penitent to prepare for absolution by a frequent approach to the sacred tribunal, intending to give a lesser penance each time he afterwards comes, with a view to his greater and better amendment of life. If a considerable part of penance, imposed for mortal sin, be omitted, the integrity of our confession becomes destroyed. To discover

if the substance of our director's injunctions be fulfilled or otherwise, we must take into account, whether the matter and circumstances omitted have a greater or lesser bearing on the object of our confessor's precept. Suppose, for instance, we were ordered to recite certain prayers in our chamber or in a church, and that they were nevertheless offered up elsewhere, it is quite evident the penance imposed would have been virtually complied with; but, if we were obliged to repeat them, with extended arms or with some other notable accompaniment of mortification, the omission of such circumstance would affect very considerably the substantial performance required. It may here be observed, that the present discipline of the Church does not require the infliction of any public or unusual penance for the commission of secret or private sins, even when very grievous in the sight of God. Great public crimes, however, which have given much scandal and injury by their commission, especially when a sentence of excommunication has been pronounced by his diocesan ordinary, against the delinquent, are occasionally repaired by

the performance of some public act of humiliation. Such cases are, however,

happily of rare occurrence.

No penance imposed on one person can be satisfied by another undertaking its performance, since it has a direct application alone to the subject of this sacrament, and has special reference to its integrity. But if such penance as the rosary, or other prayers in which responses occur, were given, it could be performed by the usual alternate recitations with others; such practice being in accordance with ecclesiastical custom, and more public devotions practised by the faithful. In like manner, whilst fulfilling the Church precept of hearing mass on a Sunday, or holy day of obligation, we could at the same time licitly recite those prayers given us for penance, unless the matter had been otherwise regulated by our director. However, supposing our confessor to have required our assisting at two masses on the same day, it is evident that they must be heard successively, and that we could not satisfy his requirement, by being present, whilst they had been offered at the same time, but on different altars. In all

cases, it is best and safest to set apart a convenient time and a suitable place, that, free from all interruption, such an important duty may be devoutly and properly completed.

SECT. V.—Advantages of Frequent Confession.

These instructions, though brief, if well attended to, will be amply sufficient to dispose the penitent for a reception of the graces of this sacrament. If the innumerable spiritual advantages and consolations, which emanate from penance, were truly and perfectly known, the penitent would fly immediately to the arms of his most bountiful God, who has them always stretched forth, to receive the sinner who sincerely repents and desires to be truly converted. Many souls, perhaps, that are now in hell, would not have been there had they but confessed their sins properly, even once; for, by so doing, they might be animated by the most efficacious graces of God, which would, most probably, descend upon them. They might be induced to walk uprightly in the

paths of virtue, to practise good works, and to persevere in goodness and perfection, through the rest of their lives.

Every Catholic, who has arrived at the use of reason, having a knowledge of the difference between good and evil, is bound under pain of excommunication to make his confession at least once during the year: Paschal time, at or about Easter, is usually selected by those who do not approach more frequently, for the performance of this important duty. By complying with this precept in a proper manner, we can alone hope to avoid the guilt of mortal sin. But it is not sufficient for us to rest satisfied with the accomplishment of this absolutely necessary obligation; for all writers on a spiritual life insist on the importance and advantages of frequent confession, as a most effective means to resist temptation, to avoid sin, and to reject its occasions. Hence it would prove most desirable, that each person desiring to lead a truly Christian life, should propose to himself some established and practical rule, whereby he might be enabled to confess his sins at certain intervals within the

year. Monthly Confessions, and an approach to the Sacrament of Renance on the principal Festivals of Obligation, or on days when Indulgences may be obtained, are recommended to all persons engaged in the ordinary avocations of Those who are called to a more perfect state, and especially ecclesiastics or religious, usually confess their sins at least once each week. Whenever Christians have the misfortune to commit mortal sin, an act of contrition should be made without delay, and the very first opportunity should be sought for reconcilement with God in the tribunal of Confession. This practice will prevent habitual re-lapses, and dispose the soul for perseverance in the state of Grace.

The longer we delay repentance or conversion to God, the more difficult will we find it to approach Him towards the end of a wicked career. We ought neither to presume too much on His goodness, and we should never despair of His mercy. The devil has drawn many a soul to himself by such deceitful illusions. When we find ourselves oppressed with the burthen of mortal sin, ought we not embrace every

possible opportunity to remove its in-tolerable weight from our consciences? Ought we not, and with alacrity, fly to our God, who has said; "Come to Me, all God, who has said; "Come to Me, all you that are heavy laden, and I will refresh you!" What inexhaustible goodness! What admirable bounty! Shall we prove insensible to such divine mercy? Shall we rashly presume on such goodness? Shall we despair, when invited to partake of God's choicest graces, and when told by the Almighty Himself, "He wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he would be converted and live?" Shell we would be converted, and live?" Shall we not readily yield to His pressing solicitations with eagerness, when perhaps, this is the last time or opportunity we may be offered, in a call to repentance? Why not now begin, even in the eleventh hour, to adore and serve Him? If a wealthy man sent forth notices to all his poor debtors, to approach him within a certain time, to have their accounts remitted, or, in default, that they should be prosecuted for the respective sums owing; how gladly would they not embrace this opportunity for appearing before him, in order to have their debts entirely cancelled? Would

not those who were most afflicted, or who owed the largest sums, be sure to approach without delay? Yet how wide is the difference between a temporal and a Divine Creditor; one to whom we owe a trifling sum of money, and Him to whom we owe our existence, our preservation, our salvation, and redemption, to whom we owe all graces and blessings so bounteously showered upon us. We constantly find, however, that those sinners. who are most deeply immersed in mortal sin, are the very persons who mostly reject God's calls, although invited by Him to return with the most pressing and endearing persuasions; whilst those who are less heavily burthened seem most willing to frequent the Sacrament of Penance, in order to be relieved by Absolution. How widely different are the dispositions of Christians, and chiefly owing to the manner in which their duties are discharged! Ought not sinners take courage, and shake off this weighty and intolerable burthen; for they must know, that so sure as they thus delay conversion, so surely their burthen will become more insupportable, and still more difficult will

they find it hereafter to seek release and repose? If a large heap of rubbish, or refuse matter, were lying in a certain place, with a daily accumulation of like material constantly thrown out upon it, a person employed to carry it away must surely find it easier to be removed at first, than to wait a future time until it had been greatly increased in weight and size.

Nothing can tend more to ease our consciences and to strengthen our resolutions of amendment, than a frequent and devout approach to the Sacrament of Penance. Our natural repugnance to reveal sins to a confessor will vanish, when we are accustomed to his good instructions and wholesome advice. Those, who are most assiduous in the performance of this duty, experience comfort, consolation, peace and screnity of soul, increased the more when repeated, and when reduced to a practical observance as the rule of their lives.

SECT. VI.—Obstacles to, and preparation for, Confession.

But fear, as also the shame of confessing sins, has been a great restraint upon

many when about going to confession. These motives should not influence Christians to absent themselves; for they ought to consider, that it is still more shameful for them to abuse the graces and favours of Almighty God, who has left such ready means for reconciliation. Besides, they must consider, that their Confessor is quite well acquainted with the weakness and corruption of human nature. He knows the depraved disposi-tions of man's heart, and those evil, unruly desires of the flesh. For, indeed, who can be so cognisant of human frailty, as a person who learns the most hidden secrets of all classes and conditions, with their inmost thoughts, their words, and works; one who is appointed as a spiritual confidant, director, judge, and physician; one to whom all virtuous and devout Christians, not to speak of those who are daily outraging God by their heinous deeds, make known their transgressions and offences, whereby they have injured the Divine Majesty. And when, from ministerial experience, he knows the inmost thoughts of other penitents, those expressions of the profane and immoral.

so detrimental to purity and holiness of life, those omissions of duty, and the evil actions of hardened offenders, must not our Confessor perfectly understand that the crimes of such sinners collectively, exceed in guilt those offences committed by persons, who, although involved in mortal sin, have yet some redeeming qualities? Besides, although God may qualities? Besides, although God may have bestowed special graces and favours on our Director, he is not unacquainted with the violence of temptation and the strength of human passions. And has not God offered to you, and to all other sinners, as well as to him, those means whereby favour and Divine protection can be obtained and preserved? Therefore, your Director will not be surprised or indignant at any sincers and proper reveals. indignant at any sincere and proper revelation of your imperfections and grievous sins to him, when declared with candour and humility. The fear or shame of confessing our sins to God's minister must instantly vanish, if we but listen to the voice of reason, and impartially consider all the foregoing circumstances and suggestions.

If we be ashamed of confessing our

faults to a single person, under the seal of secrecy by every law both human and divine, what must be our confusion on the great accounting day? Our words. works, and even our most secret thoughts will then be exposed, not to one person, or to a particular class of people only, but before the whole race of mankind, from the very dawn of creation down to that day on which this general judgment shall take place. Let Christians think of this, and the shame of confessing their sins must be removed. Let the calumniator consider now, that the slandered will then understand what was the motive or object for speaking ill of him. Those, suffering from injustice, fraud, or extortion, will then discover the authors of their wrongs. The secret impurities, and even the unchaste desires of the libertine, shall then be openly exposed. The profane man, the sabbath-breaker, and the impious reviler of holy things, will not even dare to lift up his eyes before an angry God. The proud man shall be humbled, and the humble man exalted. Envious and malicious persons shall be exposed, and their designs fully revealed. The slothful and irreligious man shall be made dreadfully sensible of his want of zeal and earnestness in the service of God, during his mortal career in this life. In short, every imperfection, vice, and passion of the wicked shall then be made known to the innumerable multitudes congregated; whilst, on the contrary, the just and penitents shall hear that wished-for sentence, "Come, you blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom which was prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

Having now sufficiently disposed of both the fear and shame of confessing our sins, it will next be necessary to explain what preparation should be undergone in order to make a good confession. For some days before you confess, supposing the case of a regular monthly communicant or frequenter of this sacred tribunal, observe a becoming restraint in all your words and actions, and especially have a guard over your thoughts. If a longer interval of time than a month have elapsed since your last confession, it is quite evident that a proportionately greater care and seriousness must be de-

voted to the work of examination and preparation. Retire occasionally to your place of worship, chamber, or other quiet retreat, and beg of God to dispose your heart for the due performance of the duty which you are about to accomplish. In order to furnish your mind with suitable reflections and devotional with suitable reflections and devotional feeling, read the following prayers or acts for Confession attentively, and at intervals, as time and opportunity serve. Meditate on your own unworthiness, on God's goodness towards you, and the injuries offered to the Divine Majesty. Spend a reasonable portion of your time each morning and evening at prayer, or pious meditation, and practice other devotions during the course of the day. Examine your conscience every night before retiring to bed, in order to discover into what sins you may have fallen since morning. When in bed, represent death to yourself, sleep being its image. Consider how dangerous it is to delay repentance, lest you be surprised by the near approach of dissolution. A night will come, when we can no more behold the morning's sun arising, or a day will dawn morning's sun arising, or a day will dawn

for us, which will not be prolonged to

night.

The cases, in which a Confession is null, and consequently must be repeated, are as follows: First, When a penitent has deliberately told a lie at his Confession. in a matter embracing the guilt of mortal sin. But if he did not know it to be a mortal sin until after his confession, he need only accuse himself of this matter alone, without reiterating his confession. Secondly, If he have not sufficiently examined his conscience, especially after having been a long time absent from confession. Thirdly, When he has not firmly resolved to repent, to shun the proximate occasions of mortal sin, to restore illgotten goods, or satisfy, to the utmost of his power, for their retention, to repair injuries done to character and our neighbour's fortune or reputation. But as few persons can have an absolute moral certainty that their confessions were not deficient in any of these particulars, especially in early youth, it would be advisable for those who have a regard for their eternal salvation, to make a general confession, at least once in their lives, if

advised or permitted by a Confessor. Thus will they release themselves from all reasonable doubt in regard to this matter. Afterwards, most likely, they will begin to lead a new life, and serve God with earnestness and fidelity. It is for such purpose, that those sins, into which men most commonly fall, are set down in the table which hereafter follows. Such arrangement and method help those persons whose memory requires assistance, and who may become oblivious to past transgressions.

SECT, VII.—The Practice of Good Works in connexion with Penance.

The three eminent good works, by which satisfaction is most commonly perfected, are Prayer, Alms-deeds, and Fasting. So advantageous is Prayer, that St. Augustine calls it the key of heaven. When the petitioner perseveringly asks for a favour, although his prayer be not fervent at first, yet Almighty God frequently gives fervour and sensible devotion before he ends it. St. Bernard says, "Prayer gives strength to fast, and

fasting obtains grace to pray." A short fervent prayer often obtains what a longer, but less earnest one could not; for it is not by the length or eloquence of prayer, but by the humility and devotion of the petitioner, justification is usually attained. By prayer, the soul is relieved from its infirmities, held in communication with the Almighty, strengthened in affliction and temptation, consoled with pious sentiments and inspirations, filled with holy resolutions and fortified by Divine Grace. Its constant practice enables us to avoid sin, especially that which is most offensive to our bountiful Creator.

By alms, we dedicate our superfluities to God, for, when we give to the deserving poor, we give to God; whereas, by fasting, we chastise the rebellious or sensual delights of the flesh. If we be rich, our superfluities belong to the poor; but our alms will be as satisfactory to God if we be poor, when we give the little we are able to afford freely, and for God's sake. For we know that our Saviour was better pleased with the poor widow's mite, than with the large offerings of the great. Hence it is manifest, the value of the

thing given by those who can afford it is less regarded than the good will of a person who gives it through a pure motive. This alone makes it acceptable in the sight of God. The great St. Anthony, one day, on hearing these words in the church; "If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell all thou hast, and give it to the poor," immediately afterwards went home, sold all his estates, gave the money to those in need, and retired to a lone-some desert where he passed the remainsome desert, where he passed the remainder of his life in the most austere and self-denying manner. Indeed, so great is the merit and spiritual advantage of almsdeeds, that most divines allow it to be a greater cause for justification, than either prayer or fasting. Therefore, let a person that hopes for salvation give liberally to the poor, in accordance with his means, that he may expect a reward in heaven. No person is so poor but he can become instrumental in serving his fellow-creatures.

The third eminent good work, Fasting, is also very advantageous. Almighty God frequently bestows great blessings and favours upon those who mortify

themselves in this manner. Christ Himthemselves in this manner. Christ Himself fasted forty days and forty nights, not that He needed fasting, but that He might leave us a lesson and an example regarding its efficacy. It was by fasting that the anchorites often mortified themselves in hideous deserts, and retired places, where they passed whole years, shut out from the temptations and vices of this world, seldom eating any thing until after sunset, and even then only a small portion of a regular meal. Such was the way in which these great Such was the way in which these great luminaries of the primitive Church spent their lives. We, who bear the name of Christians, as well as they, fall infinitely short of such perfection, known to exist in the Church during the early ages of Christianity. Do we suppose it possible to obtain heaven without adopting similar or adequate means for securing salvation, after the bright examples afforded us? Do we imagine that the Almighty, who has conferred such singular graces on them, will open the gates of heaven to us, without the constant mortification of our disorderly passions and appetites?

Besides the good works to which allu-

sion has been made, a true Christian will endeavour to observe special holy practices and devotions, which lead to perfection. The duties of his state must be particularly performed. He should also endeavour to observe a well-regulated rule of life for their better performance. In a subsequent portion of this work, certain regulations and practices are set down, and reflections or resolutions regarding their individual application to a Christian's course of conduct may profitably engage attention. Without well-defined religious principles to guide our lives, we are liable to relapse into former sins or abandon altogether the practices of Christian perfection.

A PRAYER BEFORE THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

O MY Lord and my God, be merciful to me a sinner. I humbly acknowledge in Thy sight that I have been conceived and born in sin, and as all sin is darkness, so of myself I naturally run on

in the dark, from one sin to another, pleasing myself for the present, but displeasing Thee, and making myself Thy enemy; but Thou, O God, who hadst caused light to rise from darkness, didst also send in the flesh Thy only-begotten Son, to be our true light, and to enlighten every one that cometh into this world. He has admonished me of my evil inclinations, my unruly passions, and the corrupt dispositions of my heart. He has warned me now, as I hope for life and salvation, not to allow them further sway, but to subdue, eradicate, and destroy them. It is my desire and intention at present, O my God, to examine how far I have given way to them, and to discover what injustice, what ingratitude, and what sins they have induced me to commit. This inclination I acknowledge to be Thy gift. But, O Father of Mercies and of all Light, how miserably shall I deceive myself, if Thou assist me not in this work, by the influences of Thy Holy Spirit! I know that there is nothing hidden from Thy sight. But so far as I am concerned, I must confess that I am involved in error and darkness. Selflove favours my passions, and betrays me into a blind partiality towards them. Though I have many sins that look me full in the face, and cannot be hidden from my sight, yet how many more must there be that are quite unknown to me and forgotten? But do Thou, O Lord, discover even those to me: enlighten this my blindness and removed. darkness, this my blindness, and remove every veil that hides my sins from me, that so I may be no longer unknown to that so I may be no longer unknown to myself, nor a stranger to my own failings. Send down Thy Holy Spirit into my heart, and let the beams of Thy Divine Light open my understanding, that I may have a full view of all my sins and imperfections. Thus knowing myself, and sincerely repenting of all my past offences, may I return to Thee once more, and be received again into Thy favour.

II. PRAYER.

O HOLY Ghost, Eternal source of Light! mercifully deign to enlighten my understanding, let nothing escape the exact search I am about. Thou hast

created me, and Thou art to be my Judge. Thou fully and truly knowest my heart. Shew me now my sins, clearly as I shall know them, when, quitting this life, I must appear before Thee to hear judgment pronounced. My business at present is to prevent its rigour. If I were to be deficient this day in exactness, or insincere during examination and accusation, Thou wouldst most certainly correct at Thy unerring tribunal the negligence and iniquity of such proceeding. Discover to me then, O God, those secret evil thoughts, those irregular desires. evil thoughts, those irregular desires, those criminal words or actions, and those omissions in my duty, with all the scan-dal I may have given. Do not permit that a criminal love for myself should now seduce and blind me. Remove the veil it places before the eyes of my soul, that I may fully know my own state, and then make myself thoroughly understood by a sincere and humble confession to Thy minister.

III. PRAYER.

LIKE the prodigal child I desire to enter seriously into myself, and without delay to forsake my evil ways, in which I have been wearied out, in pursuit of empty toys and mere shadows. I have sought in vain to satisfy my thirst with muddy waters, and my hunger with the husks of swine. I wish to return to Thee, O Thou Fountain of Life. O my God, though I can stray from Thee far enough of myself, I cannot make one step towards returning to Thee, unless Thy divine grace incite and assist me. Thy grace then, I most humbly implore. Prostrate in spirit before the throne of Thy mercy, I ask it for the sake of Thy Divine Son Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, who died upon the cross for me and for Thou hast declared that all sinners. there is joy in heaven for one sinner doing penance. Give me now Thy grace, that I may truly repent, and let all the saints and angels in heaven rejoice at my conversion. Assist me in this great work. Enlighten me with Thy heavenly

light, that I may discover all my imperfections, see all my sins in their true colours, sincerely detest and confess them. I know Thou desirest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live. I know Thy manifold mercies are above all Thy works, and often prevent Thy Justice. As in Thy mercy Thou hast spared me so long, and hast now inspired me with this desire of returning to Thee, happily finish the work Thou hast begun, assist me in every part of my preparation, procure for me a perfect reconciliation and pardon for my offences.

Preliminary Directions.—Previous to your Examination of Conscience, endeavour to solve the following questions with diligence and accuracy. How many dayr, weeks, months, or years since I last made a sacramental Confession? State the particular day, if possible; and this, with a little attention in the discharge of so important a duty, can hardly ever be forgotten. Did I then receive absolution? or was I required by my former Confessor to return again for such a purpose? If able to answer the first part of this question in the affirmative, you are at liberty to make your Confession to any duly qualified director; but if you have not received absolution it would be desirable that you end your Confession with the priest to whom you last went, when it is possible to find him. If this cannot be done, it would be necessary to accuse yourself of the sins for which absolution had not been obtained, and which have not yet been submitted to the consideration of another director. Have I

faithfully performed my penance! Recollect it is of special obligation to do so; for otherwise one part of this Sacrament is left incomplete and unfulfilled. Except under very peculiar or unavoidable circumstances, this penance must be fulfilled without delay, and usually before we begin the immediate preparation for a new Confession.

Next put the question to yourself, Was my last Confession a good or a sacrilegious one? Or were any of my previous Confessions had or defective ! Did I in Confession tell any falsehood regarding mortal sin known by me to be mortal ! Did I receive the form of absolution from any priest, without having been previously freed from an excommunication, a suspension, a censure, or an interdict, which affected me? Did I omit the Confession of any mortal sins, which might have been remembered had sufficient diligence been used in former Examinations of Conscience! Did I deliberately employ any means to conceal from my director the enormity of mortal sins already confessed ? Did I confess without a true sorrow for my sins! Had I no sincere desire or intention to amend my life? I no real purpose to avoid all future dangerous and proximate occasions of mortal sin? Did I not intend honestly and faithfully to perform my penance ! Did I go to Holy Communion after this bad Confession case you cannot answer those questions in a satisfactory manner, your conscience must reprove you with having still to account for a bad and sacrilegious Confession. It will thus become necessary to make a General Confession, so as to repair the defects of former Confessions, and it will be necessary to explain to your director the reason why you are obliged to make such repa-It will also be requisite, not only to make past Confessions over again, but to acknowledge how often you confessed and communicated in a sacrilegious manner. You must state also if any other Sacraments, such as Confirmation, Matrimony, Extreme Unction, have been received or administered in this bad condition of the soul, and how often such sacrilegious acts have occurred.

Bear all the necessary particulars well in your memory, as it is essential that these material statements be made first to your director, before you begin the enumeration of other sins. Be guided of course in the matter by your spiritual father, whose experience, judgment and knowledge will best direct the method to be observed in proceeding with your accusation. Before scrutinizing the particular sins committed, since you have been last absolved, recite the following preparatory prayer.

A PROTESTATION BEFORE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

GOD, the searcher of hearts, behold I here protest in Thy presence, that what I now design is sincerely intended for the honour of Thy name. Because I heartily desire to be delivered from the guilt of my sins, therefore I approach this preparation for Confession and Examination of Conscience, that by complying with Thy holy institutions, I may obtain Thy blessing and pardon. Enlighten my mind as to the exact state of my interior. Enable me to recollect all my offences for which I have not yet obtained pardon. May Thy holy grace assist me in the right undertaking of this great duty, as it is Thy mercy which hath called me to its performance.

INSTRUCTIONS

Regarding the principles of our moral actions and their practical application to ourselves.

That the penitent may be enabled to form some adequate idea of a true consciousness regarding the nature of sins committed by him, it will be requisite to premise a few general principles bearing on this subject, before stating in detail degrees of special culpability under their appropriate heads. Human actions, which render us accountable to God, suppose the use of reason and free will on our part, with a previous knowledge and an advertence that their nature or object be good or bad, as determined by natural, positive or Divine Hence we may conclude, that all sins of habit and their evil consequences, even although not fully adverted to at the time of occurrence, must be imputed to us; because we have wilfully allowed them to grow with our growth, and because we might have rationally foreseen or indirectly feared their injurious results. Thus blas-

phemies and quarrels, which are generally the natural consequences of drunkenness, are imputable to the habitual drunkard, who, from previous experience or correct information, should know he is liable to fall into such crimes, although not directly willing to commit them in his moments of sobriety. When evil is not intended, or when an evil result is not rationally suspected, no degree of culpability can be attributed to man. No sinful act can be done, even although a great and desirable advantage or good be the certain result. Ignorance of sins or duties, occurring through our own fault or negligence, will render us accountable in the sight of God. Every well-defined duty must be conscientiously performed, although accidental evils may probably follow; for these latter evils are not directly desired or pro-cured in such a case. He, who by the commission or omission of an action intends a bad consequence, even though accident prevent such result taking place, is held accountable for the malice designed, and such person should confess this evil bent of his disposition and will in the matter.

That degree of advertence or deliberation, with which a sin is committed, materially influences the culpability of our actions. Thus, an imperfect assent of our will or half-formed intention of our mind, regarding even the violation of an important precept, will not constitute more than a venial sin, as all theologians are agreed. Full and deliberate advertence, in matters of great moment, is required, in order to render the delinquent guilty of mortal sin. In matters of trivial importance, either in thought, word, action, or omission, venial sin is only committed, although the will may fully and deliberately consent.

Three different conditions are required, which would cause us to be held morally responsible for any evil result that might happen through our instrumentality. 1. That we could rationally calculate or suspect a bad effect following our act, at least, in some indistinct form.* 2. That we are able to refrain from an action, which may, or probably will, lead to a bad con-

[•] Otherwise, an effect cannot be considered as desired, when in no manuer foreseen or expected.

sequence.* 9. That we are bound not to act, on account of the evil result to be ap-

prehended.

Again, we should bear in mind, that it is lawful for us to cause or procure a good effect, even although an evil result follow, provided these following conditions accompany our action. I. That the end of the person acting be a lawful one. 2. That the action or cause be indifferent or good in itself. 3. That the good effect follow as directly from the cause, as the bad result. 4. That the good effect at least compensate for the evil consequence accompanying it. Thus, in the first instance, the causing of a good effect cannot be unlawful on account of the aim or object, for this is supposed to be a lawful one. Secondly, nor is it unlawful by reason of the cause itself, which is judged to be neither morally good or bad in itself, when indifferent; and in the other alternative, it must be actually

Otherwise, the will would not be engaged in such action.

[†] Otherwise, using our undoubted right of action, we would only permissively stand in relation to the evil effect, which would not be directly desired by ourselves.

good. Thirdly, neither is it unlawful, through the prevision of a bad result; for, according to the hypothesis, this consequence is at least compensated for by the good effect produced, and the good effect is alone intended. And, lastly, each person has a right to procure any good object through a lawful cause, when the good obtained is not counter-vailed by evil resulting; for it is a principle acknowledged by divines, that a strict right to the end, when lawfully sought, creates a right to means necessary for securing this end.

The goodness of any action may be safely assumed, if its object, aim, and circumstances, be in accordance with, or not opposed to, the Law of God. These three constituents are required to exist in connection with the lawfulness of an action. If there be a defect regarding any one of them, the act perpetrated with our consent and knowledge becomes criminal in the sight of God. The object of an action, morally speaking, is good; such as the love of God; or evil, such as the crime of blasphemy; or indifferent in itself, such as necessarily sleeping, or

doing any particular action in the natural course of life, without reference to its special direction. If indifferent actions be referred to God's honour, or our neighbour's edification, these acts obtain merit for the performer, owing to his vir-tuous intention or direction. The aim or end of an action is two-fold. For example, giving alms to the poor, which relieves distress; this is called the end of the work itself. Again, giving them for the glory of God or for human vanity; this is called the end or intention of the person who performs the act. Both of these ends must be good to constitute a good moral action; that is, the work itself must be good or at least must not be evil of its nature, and the primary or principal intention for which it is done must be good. If a good work be undertaken from a good motive, or in other words with a good end; then such work remains substantially good, even although some imperfection or venial sin may accompany the primary intention. For example, a person proposes to build a church or endow an orphanage from a love of religion or from charity; but

whilst the work is proceeding he might yield to a little vanity at the results accomplished. That vanity, though sinful, would not deprive him of substantial merit, arising from the good performed. The circumstances of an action are its accidental concomitants, not directly intended, although included in the performance of such act. They are usually enumerated and particularized under these seven heads: 1. Who, means the agent and his station or condition. 2. What, implies the quality or quantity of an object. 8. Where, indicates the place, whether sacred or profane, in which an action took place. 4. By what means, signifies the instruments or agencies employed by the perpetrator. 5. Why, indicates the aim intended. 6. In what manner, signifies whether an action be done maliciously or in good faith, with fixed deliberation or otherwise, with advertence or inadvertence. 7. When, refers to the time of perpetration, as on a Sunday or holiday, or on an ordinary week day; and the duration of habit or intention is important as a circumstance in determining the nature of an action. By these

several circumstances, on examination, we may discover if an action accord or disagree with right reason and the Law of God. Some circumstances appertain to the morality of an action; whereas, others are of no moment, or become indifferent in reference to it. Some do not materially affect an action; others altogether change its nature or degree. It must also be observed, that circumstances venially evil, at least in a slight measure, vitiate actions otherwise good; but the substance of a lawful action still remains, even when impaired by a slight admixture of defect. These matters being premised, the Christian must always bear in mind that an action, supernaturally conferring merit, is what he does in obedience to God's Holy Law, and which may be considered deserving reward from the Almighty.

It will be of the utmost importance for a penitent to form a right habit of discrimination in examining his conscience. Religious instruction greatly tends to this, guided as we should be by the dictates of pure motives, and by a sound judgment. A right conscience regards

sin or virtue as it really exists, both in nature and degree. That we may avoid an erroneous conscience, we must be careful neither to indulge in groundless scruples, nor to regard our sins with too much laxity of principle or practice. But, on these matters, without unduly disturbing one's own mind, or that of a director, it is always desirable to apply for advice under our doubts to an experienced and a prudent Confessor. We should accept his direction and decisions with docility and humble submission, regarding the practical details of our every day life, and consider our director as holding the place of God Himself in the sacred tribunal of Confession.

A TABLE OF SINS TO HELP THE MEMORY WHEN WE ARE ABOUT TO PREPARE FOR CONFESSION.

Before preparing for Confession, carefully examine yourself in thought, word, deed, and omission, by using this following record of sins. After each question

proposed, pause for some time, in order that you may better recollect those places where you have been, the persons you were in company with, those special faults you may have committed, the times when you have sinned, the scandals you have given, the injury you have done, or whether you have been accessary to another person's sin. Having observed this method, you will easily find out your principal sins, by the assistance of God's grace. Afterwards you must take particular care to recollect these sins with their important circumstances, and confess them to your spiritual director.

ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

First Commandment.

"I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before Me."*

The substance of God's Commandments is only here given, as referring to obligations imposed on all mankind. The occasion and reasons for giving these Commandments to the Jewish people, with the exact words, will be found in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus, and in the fourth and fifth chapters of Deuteronomy,

The Commandments of God are usually classed as affirmative, when they enjoin certain good actions; and as negative, when they prohibit indulgence in any bad action. This first Commandment is one of the affirmative precepts of God's Holy Law. It obliges us frequently, but only at stated periods, to practise those acts of religion which promote the greater glory and honour of God, by manifesting our love towards Him. Every action opposite to these pious practices is strictly forbidden under pain of sin, which is more or less grievous according to its nature. To observe fully the First Commandment, love, adoration, prayer, and sacrifice, to a very exalted degree, are required from us. The Almighty is also relatively worshipped by a veneration paid to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the saints and angels, or rendered towards objects having a special relation to religious services.

The mortal ains committed against this Commandment are usually held to be those gross superstitions, derogatory to the love, honour, and adoration of God. such as idolatry, or giving to any creature the worship due only to the Almighty; vain observances, such as seeking to acquire knowledge, or to effect cures by incantations, the belief in observance of events resulting from unlawful practices; divination, or seeking for things lost or prying into the future, through the intervention of the devil, or through the practice of diabolic usages; magic, or the art of working wonders beyond the natural powers of man through diabolic agency; witchcraft, enchantments, or causing injury to any creature by the devil's presumed intervention; special irreverence towards God, such as sacrilege, violation, or injury of any person, place, or object dedicated to reli gion; simony, which means buying or selling for temporal gain ecclesiastical preferments or anything of a sacred character or relating to spiritual matters, when out of the legitimate pursuits of trade, and contrary to the interest of religion; formally tempting God, such as by seeking to prove one's innocence through the result of a duel, walking over red-hot bars of iron, &c. practices not generally known in our day, but referable to past

ages.

Some of the foregoing acts may not amount to the guilt of mortal sin, owing to ignorance, inadvertence, the imperfect nature or insignificance of a particular practice, or on account of simplicity, credulity, timidity, &c. especially amongst rude and unlettered persons.

Have I been addicted to idolatry, or to any other strange or false form of religious worship?

Have I given to any creature, object, or pursuit the service and affection due

only to God?

Have I loved God above all things?

Have I arrogated to myself a part of the glory in any action, and not given all to God?

Have I borne overmuch love to creatures?

Am I ignorant of the Creed, the Ten Commandments of God, the Lord's Prayer, the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity, or the Precepts of the Church?

Do I know or practise the duties of my

station in life?

Have I murmured against God, because of my own adversity, or the prosperity of others? Have I confided in God, or have I despaired of His mercy?

Have I presumed on His goodness?

Did I ever go to witches, wizards, or like cheats, for counsel, or to procure the recovery of things lost?

Have I used charms, superstitious words or actions, for the cure of diseases, or for the acquiring of anything else?

Have I recommended myself daily to

God?

Have I given scandal to sectaries or heretics, or have I favoured their sect or heresy?

Have I hindered any person's conver-

sion from heresy?

Have I conformed my will in all things to the Divine Will?

Have I been guilty of heresy, or dis-

belief in any article of faith?

Have I wilfully doubted regarding any

article of faith?

Have I rashly exposed myself to the danger of infidelity or heresy, by reading bad books, by keeping wicked company, or by going into public places of worship belonging to other communions during the time of their preaching or service?

Have I joined with them in their worship, publicly or privately?

Have I by word or deed denied my

faith?

Have I been guilty of sacrilege?

Have I profaned or polluted any church or holy place, relic, vessel, picture, image, vestment, font, or any other object dedicated or consecrated to God's service?

Have I neglected to consult my director when doubtful regarding the legality or sinfulness of any thought, word, act, or omission?

Have I neglected religious instructions

and spiritual reading?

Have I neglected to encourage a lively faith, in the presence of God, in the Blessed Eucharist, in the protection and intercession of the Blessed Virgin, of my patron saint, and of my angel guardian, or in the last judgment, hell and heaven?

Have I practised the three theological

virtues of faith, hope, and charity?*

*They are called Theological because they relate immediately to God's honour and glory; for by Faith, we worship God as the Sovereign Truth—by Hope we put our whole trust in God, as being the source of all good—and by Charity, we pay homage to God in all His attributes and excellencies, loving Him with our whole heart

Have I frequented schools where a false religion, indifferentism, or infidelity had

been taught or encouraged?

Have I, if a child or pupil, neglected my catechism or a sound and safe secular instruction as given in approved Catholic schools?

Have I been wilfully distracted during

prayer?

Have I neglected to pray fervently when tempted to sin, or when in probable dan-

ger of death?

Have I practised the four cardinal virtues: viz. Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance?

Have I promoted or favoured schism?

Have I slighted or ridiculed the three Evangelical Counsels—voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity, and entire obedience?

Have I joined, supported, attended, or encouraged oath-bound or secret societies prejudicial to the interests and true principles of religion, morality, or civil society?

Have I favoured or approved persons,

and above all; because God alone is in Himself and by nature everything that is adorable, good, and perfect.

propositions, or writings condemned by

Have I circulated false versions of the Holy Scriptures, infidel or sectarian books or tracts, sold or published them, or lent them to be read by others, especially by ignorant or badly-informed persons?

Have I kept them in my house, with manifest danger to my own faith, or to

that of my own family and friends?

Have I neglected to instruct or assist those seeking the true faith, when oppor-

tunities were afforded me?

Have I murmured against Divine Providence, especially when suffering affliction, imprisonment, trials, loss of money or goods, sickness, disappointments, or from the death or misfortune of near relations and dear friends?

Have I committed any of these six sins against the Holy Ghost: viz. despair of salvation, presumption of God's mercy without amendment of life, impugning the known truth in matters of faith or religion, envy at another's spiritual good, obstinacy in sin, or final impenitence?

Have I received Holy Communion after

having broken my fast?

Have I occupied too much time in worldly affairs, to the neglect of my religious concerns?

concerns?

Have I, through mistaken piety, spent too much of my time in devout practices, when more pressing and serious duties demand my immediate and undivided attention?

Have I neglected frequent pious aspirations during the day?

Have I broken good resolutions?

Have I manifested religious indifference for my own salvation or that of others?

Have I entertained in mind, or outwardly professed, infidel, irreligious, or sectarian opinions?

Have I taken up serious or incompati-

ble obligations too hastily and rashly?

Have I little firmness in good purposes, or have I distrusted God's mercy and Providence?

Have I given way to melancholy, or scrupulousness, or despondency?

Have I exposed myself to the danger

of tempting or offending God?

Have I thought it impossible to persevere in the state of grace, or to avoid mortal sin?

Have I endeavoured to procure the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord?

Have I cultivated the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, fidelity, modesty, continency, and chastity?

Have I disregarded any traditional practice of the Church, especially with the accompaniment of scandal?

Have I made my worldly affairs subser-

vient to those of God?

Have I a love for freque

Have I a love for frequent confession, holy communion, good counsel, and devout inspirations?

Have I tender devotion towards our Blessed Lady, the Immaculate Mother of God, or towards the saints and angels?

Do I neglect or reject God's graces and

the means of grace?

Have I received any sacrament of the

Church in a state of mortal sin?

Have I sanctified my daily actions by offering them to God soon after I awake from sleep?

Have I been unwilling to endure privations, insults, injustices, or ridicule, when the interests of God and of religion require such sacrifice of my feelings?

Have I always sought the will of God in

my regard?

Have I wanted resignation or gratitude towards God?

Have I practised the seven spiritual works of mercy; viz., to give good counsel, to instruct the ignorant, to admonish and correct sinners, to comfort the afflicted and troubled, to pardon affronts and injuries, to bear wrongs patiently, and to pray for the living and the dead?

Have I practised the seven corporal works of mercy; viz., to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to harbour the harbourless, to visit the sick, to relieve prisoners, and to bury

the dead ?

Have I used diabolic invocations or practices, or have I resorted to magic, mesmerism, clairvoyance, or charlatanism, in a way injurious to faith, morality, intellect, or health?

Have I weakened confidence or lessened reverence towards the clergy and religious,

by thoughtless or malicious gossip, idle

criticism, jokes, or satire?

Have I neglected the daily practice of morning and evening prayer, or not devoted a sufficient time to pious performances, such as meditation?

Have I been afraid or ashamed to exhibit myself or act as a Catholic, when such manifestations might justly be ex-

pected from me?

Have I neglected to send for the priest when supposed to be dying, or when dangerously ill, either in my own case or in that of other persons, over whom I had charge, or when bound in charity so to act?

Have I through human respect or temporal interest, when fully convinced on the matter, delayed embracing the true faith?

Have I been willing to sin against the Almighty, rather than lose the object of my desire?

Have I in any manner outraged or violated a person consecrated to God?

Have I stolen or removed any consecrated object connected with a church or holy place?

Have I railed at or despised holy persons, places, practices, or things?

Have I been ignorant regarding the

duties of religion?

Have I been negligent in instructing, or procuring the necessary instructions,

for those under my care?

Have I given credit to dreams, dream books, to omens, to card-cutting, to spells, to cup-tossing, to astrology, to witchcraft, to sorcery, to fortune-tellers, in order to find out things to come?

Have I continued in my sins, without

any thought of amendment?

Have I depended upon a deathbed repentance, or relied upon myself rather than upon divine grace?

Have I neglected for a long time to return to God by repentance, after falling

into mortal sin?

Have I resisted the inspirations of God to observe counsels of perfection?

Have I prevented evil when I could and

ought?

Have I denied my religion, or committed sin through human respect?

Have I gone to Confession or Commu-

pion merely to clear myself from suspicion

in the eyes of my director, parents, pa-

trons, or pastors?

Have I been negligent in the exercises of divine worship, seldom or never adoring and praising God, giving Him no thanks for His benefits, praying but little or with little attention, or omitting to make acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity?

Did I talk of others or of their faults unnecessarily in the tribunal of Penance?

Have I omitted sacramental penance enjoined, or have I negligently performed it?

Have I acquitted myself carelessly regarding religious duties?

Have I been ashamed of things that

concern God's honour or service?

Have I given way to unlawful thoughts or irreverent curiosity, or to the desire of knowing what God only should know concerning myself or others?

Have I jested at the ceremonies of the

Church, or on other holy things?

Have I condemned or laughed at deyout and religious persons?*

[•] How often, when, where, with whom, at what time, what scandal have I given, what injury have I done, in each particular instance?

Second Commandment.

"Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain."

This is one of the negative precepts of God's Law. It

binds us always and under all circumstances.

We may generally take it for granted that the following crimes committed against this Commandment have the guilt of mortal sin annexed: viz. blasphemy, or swearing by the Holy Name of God, by any of the Three Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, by the blood or death of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the Sacraments, Heaven, the Virgin Mary, the Saints, or by any person or object having an intimate relation with the Divinity; imprecation on our own souls, against the Church, Faith, or Religion, cursing the rain, winds, &c. as directed by Divine Providence, and with the addition of God's name by a special irreverence; perjury, or invoking the Divinity as witness in derogation of the known truth; breaking yows binding under pain of mortal sin.

A slight or casual use of God's name without necessity, and not designed to be very irreverent, half-formed expressions of imprecatory emotion or passion uttered without very evil advertence, are not generally regarded

as grievous sins against this Commandment.

Have I abused or ridiculed the Holy

Scriptures?

Have I profaned holy places or things? Have I blasphemed God or His saints? Have I behaved with irreverence in the

house of God?

Have I broken or deferred any solemn vow or lawful promise made to Him?

Have I sworn falsely, unjustly, rashly, or what I did not certainly know, whether it was true or false?

Have I had a custom of swearing passionately or inconsiderately by the name of God, by my soul, or by way of imprecation upon myself or others?

Have I sworn by the Blood or Wounds

of Jesus Christ?

Have I used any other blasphemous

or shocking oath?

Have I talked with levity or irreverence regarding holy ceremonies, confraternities, religious pictures, images, or indulgences?

Have I neglected to genuflect with proper reverence before the Blessed Sacrament, when kept in the church, and

especially when exposed?

Have I made a vow or sworn to perform what is trivial, rash, unlawful, or

impossible to be done?

Have I passionately or thoughtlessly vowed or sworn without an intention of fulfilling my engagement?

Have I encouraged blasphemy or irre-

verent conversation by joining in it, by laughing at it, or by listening to it, with

real or apparent complaisance?

Have I done so in the presence of many, habitually or occasionally, or before religious persons, Catholics or sectaries, adults or children?

Have I reprehended cursers, swearers, or blasphemers when I ought, or when I could do so with good results?

Have I cursed myself, others, or any

creatures?

Have I provoked others or been accessory so far as to make them curse, swear, or blaspheme?

Have I used the name of God lightly

or unnecessarily?*

Third Commandment.

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day."

This precept of God's Law is affirmative in so much as it requires us specially to observe in a religious manner those days set apart for public worship and for the sanctification of our own souls. It is negative, in so far as it prohibits us from engaging in unnecessary servile works on such days.

* See Note, p. 75.

We should be guilty of mortal sin against this commandment, if we absent ourselves from public religious service or devotions on the Sabbath, during a notable time, unless prevented, owing to some reasonable cause; as also if any considerable portion of the day—estimated by the generality of theologians as exceeding from two to three hours—be devoted to unnecessary servile works by ourselves, or by those under our control and direction.

Other separate omissions of religious practices, not of special requirement, on Sundaysor Holydays of Obligation, voluntary distractions at Mass, yet with a certain amount of attention, do not usually fall under the category of mortal sins. Liberal pursuits, such as the study of languages, arts, sciences, reading and writing for improvement of the mind, are regarded as lawful occupations on

such days.

Have I kept the Lord's day, or other festivals commanded to be kept holy, by not spending a suitable portion of time in exercises of piety and religion?

Have I bought or sold things unneces-

sarily on these days?

Have I done or commanded to be done any servile work not of necessity on those

days?

Have I neglected to hear Mass when not prevented by sickness, distance, duty, or necessity, or have I hindered others from hearing Mass on those days?

Have I gone to Mass unbecomingly

dressed, or through a bad motive?

Have I been wilfully distracted by

thought, or objects, during the time of Mass?

Have I talked, lounged, gazed, or laughed in the church?

Have I caused others to act in like

manner?

Have I avoided hearing sermons?*

Have I spent the Lord's day, or a Festival of Obligation in laziness or idleness, by not attending Vespers, evening prayers, by not reading moral and pious books, or by not praying?

Have I spent the Sunday or holyday at fairs or markets, in public houses or at other unlawful gatherings held on such days?

Have I been engaged in improper dancing, drinking, diceing, going long journeys when they could be avoided, keeping wicked or foolish company, gaming, or unlawful amusements on Sundays and Holydays?

* The Decrees of the Council of Trent dealare, that each person is bound to be present at his parish church when it can be done conveniently, in order to hear the Word of God. (See Sess. xxi. cap. iv.) The same holy Council requires, under pain of incurring ecclesiastical censures, if necessary, that children should attend on Sundays and holydays to learn the Christian Doctrine, in their respective Parish Churches.

Have I spent these days in dissipation or sin?

Have I been the occasion of others so spending them negligently or irreligiously?

Have I neglected the necessary precautions to ensure being at Mass; have I come too late, or went away from church during its celebration?

Have I instructed those under my care, especially children and servants, in their catechism or other religious duties?*

Fourth Commandment.

"Honour thy father and thy mother."

This is one of the affirmative precepts of the Divine Law. In a direct and primary sense it requires at least occasional if not frequent and real manifestations of love and duty towards our parents. It also requires us to reverence those who hold the place of parents in our regard, such as pastors, masters, mistresses, superiors, &c. In a secondary sense there is an obligation for parents loving, as also for morally or religiously guiding their children, arising from both the natural and divine law. The mutual obligations of consorts, superiors and dependants, are classed under the head of this precept by theologians. Children are obliged to love and reverence their parents, as also to obey all their lawful and reasonable commands. Parents are required to love their children in accordance with God's law, and they are obliged to provide for them a suitable religious and secular instruction, with support and sustenance until children are furnished with a reasonable provision for

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

their proper establishment in life. Husbands and wives are obliged to love each other, to live together and to fulfil all the requisite objects of marriage. Masters and mistresses are obliged to treat their servants kindly. to teach and reprove them when necessary, to influence their attention to religious duties, to give them a fair rate of wages, and fulfil all engagements entered into with punctuality and justice. Servants are required to respect and obey their masters or mistresses, in accordance with the requirements of religion, whilst fidelity and attention to their interests are also matters of primary obligation. Whilst pastors and teachers owe affection, good example, instruction and prudent correction to those under their charge; the latter are bound to love, reverence and obey their superiors in all lawful directions given, and when called upon to manifest externally their respect. Whilst rulers and others, exercising authority over subjects, are obliged to govern and discharge their duties with justice and prudence; subjects are obliged by the natural and divine law to respect and obey their superiors in those things which do not contravene the law of God.

It may be assumed that mortal sins are committed against this precept when children strike, use maledictions, inwardly hate, wish death or grievous injury, cause deep affliction, totally neglect in poverty, disease, or spiritual necessity, disobey prudent counsels with regard to bad companions, places of evil resort, or other matters which have reference to Christian directions, so far as parents are concerned. When those latter neglect to bring up their children in the knowledge and practice of religious duties, when treating them with very culpable indulgence, or exercising extreme severity towards them. when using obscene or blasphemous expressions in their presence, sending them to sectarian schools or heretical places of worship, parents or guardians cannot be excused from the guilt of mortal sin. Husbands and wives striking or quarrelling with each other, and calling odious or reproachful names, especially in public, usually sin grievously. Generally speaking, superiors are guilty of mortal sin when they tolerate great abuses and injustices which come within their province to remove; if they do not promote morality and religious practices by advice, encouragement, or example; if they are guilty of tyranny, unnecessary cruelty, or harsh treatment towards dependants or subjects. The latter are guilty of grievous sin in exciting disaffection or rebellion tending to create anarchy or subvert legitimate authority; when they calumniate and scandalously outrage or disrespect those who should be venerated for their virtues, abilities, station, or rank.

Offences of a minor character relating to the Fourth Commandment are usually classed under the head of venial sins, as affecting the relative positions of various

persons.

Have I honoured my parents, or have I endeavoured to relieve their wants?

Have I despised them, been ashamed of them, or spoken contemptuously to them or of them?

Have I taken delight in provoking, scolding, threatening or vexing them?

Have I been prevish, troubled, angry, or impatient, when told of my faults, or corrected for them?

Have I been disrespectful or disobedient to the bishops and priests of the Church?

Have I treated them in a haughty or insulting manner?

Have I criticised or ridiculed them, especially in reference to the discharge of their sacred functions?

Have I been wanting in honour, obedience, and support to His Holiness the Pope or to ecclesiastical superiors?

Have I contemptuously or negligently broken the rules of any school, college, confraternity, guild, or religious society?

Have I concealed things of importance from my parents or superiors, without grave and lawful reason?

Have I neglected my parents in sickness,

old age, or misfortune?

Have I been deficient in cheerful respect

and courtesy to them?

Have I shown myself actuated by mystery or secrecy, in little things, which ought to be known by them?

Have I unlawfully opposed the established authorities of the country, excited to rebellion, riot, violence, or public con-

fusion?

Have I been wanting in filial duty to our Holy Father the Pope, by thought, word, act, or omission?

Have I disobeyed or disrespected my parents, or been habituated to this con-

duct?

Have I honoured my superiors, mas-

ters, mistresses, according to their station?

Have I desired unhappiness to or

spoken evil of them?

Have I cursed, insulted, or ridiculed them, or have I murmured against them?

Have I struck or hurt them?

Have I done things without their leave, and which I believed would be objected to or cause great anxiety?

Have I revealed their secrets and do-

mestic affairs?

Have I promised or contracted marriage without their knowledge or just consent?

Have I been haughty, tyrannical, or ungrateful towards my parents or patrons?

Have I neglected their wishes or last

will?

Have I prayed for them, or have I deceived them?

Have I been the cause of any uneasi-

ness or trouble to them?

Have I mocked or jested at aged persons, or have I used due reverence towards them?

Have I judged rashly of superiors? Have I entertained hatred, envy, aversion, or desires of revenge towards them?

Have I listened to calumny, or detraction of their character, when I could

readily have prevented it?

Have I cheated them?*

Fifth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not kill."

This is a negative precept, and of course obligatory at all times and under all circumstances. The sins prohibited by this Commandment, however, vary in degree.

Wilful murder, homicide with advertence, mortally wounding, suicide without a loss of the reasoning faculty, duelling, rashly or unnecessarily endangering another person's death or one's own, without just cause, procuring abortion, passionate anger, an inordinate desire of revenge, striking with intent to wound, and settled hatred, are all grievous sins in their own nature.

Slight quarrels, anger, injurious words, hasty reproaches, dislike, &c. not attended with great scandal or deep-seated malice, are not usually mortal sins, especially in young persons or in those exposed to rude assaults and temptations in a particular sphere of life.

Have I given way to hastiness, rage, contrariness, or unpleasant peculiarities of temper?

Have I been jealous, unreasonable, or

tyrannical in my conduct?

Have I teased, railed at, or made others unhappy?

* See Note p. 75.

Have I grieved immoderately?

Have I too severely, hastily, peevishly, rashly, improperly, or unnecessarily corrected children, servants, or others?

Have I used insulting or irritating ges-

tures or actions?

Have I engaged in lawsuits through desire of revenge?

Have I been guilty of wanton cruelty

towards animals?

Have I perpetrated wilful murder, manslaughter, or engaged in any pursuit or act calculated unjustly to destroy health or life, through a desire of gain, convenience, ambition, hatred, or revenge?

Have I maimed or injured any person? Have I, without due caution, supplied poisons or dangerous weapons to children, foolish or mad people, or to any suspicious characters?

Have I engaged in, assisted at, or encouraged duels, boxing matches, prize-fighting, challenges, faction fights, intimidation or unlawful strikes?

Have I been guilty of spiritual murder, by speaking lightly of, laughing at, or boasting of sin, in the presence of others liable to be led astray or easily cor-

rupted?

Have I neglected good advice or fraternal correction, especially when likely to be attended with a good result?

Have I suffered myself to be carried

away by anger or motions of wrath?

Have I applied injurious language?

Have I borne hatred, malice, enmity or desired revenge?

Have I taken pleasure in such thoughts? Have I threatened or struck others?

Have I desired, shortened, or effected my own or another's death?

Have I patiently endured things con-

trary to my inclination?

Have I forgiven injuries?

Have I refused to speak to or salute my neighbour through motives of distaste or aversion?

Have I induced or enticed others to

commit such sins?

Have I sought to procure, or have I desired the death, misfortune, or disgrace of myself or others?

Have I hastened death or been impa-

tient of life?

Have I made women miscarry?

Have I oppressed any, especially the poor and unprotected?

Have I made others quarrel?

Have I refused to be reconciled with those desiring reconciliation?*

Sixth and Ninth Commandments.

These are negative precepts. They are usually considered under the same head, as both relate to the same object; the ninth Commandment forbidding in desire what the sixth Commandment forbids externally, either in word or deed. More dangerous and numerous mortal sing are probably committed against these, than against all other Commandments united. Every voluntary and deliberate consent of the mind to any carnal and impure thought, word, or action, forbidden by either of these Commandments, is grievously criminal in the sight of God. Moreover, few adult persons are exempt from temptations against purity, without a special grace from heaven. Absence of wilful pleasure, or inadvertence and levity, or jesting without any deliberate or depraved intention, may excuse persons from the guilt of mortal sin in the lesser degrees of impurity, such as in kissing, embracing, speaking, or touching. Reading books and hearing lectures, which treat on matters of a dangerous although professional nature, are permitted however to persons who require such special information; whilst prayer and spiritual preparation must be em-ployed to preserve the mind from retaining impressions contrary to the virtue of chastity.

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

Sixth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Have I been guilty of adultery or fornication?

Have I committed sodomy or incest?

Have I frequented dancing-houses, immoral exhibitions, immodest or unbecoming amusements?

Have I undressed or exposed myself immodestly, especially before those of a

different sex?

Have I encouraged bad ideas or criminal intimacy by letters, by lending bad books, by loose manners, by immodest, indecent, gross, or foolish valentines?

Have I enticed or solicited to acts of

immorality?

Have I corrupted the young or innocent?

Have I remained with dangerous com-

pany and in places of evil resort?

Have I been too often alone with persons of another sex, without necessity or at unreasonable times and places?

Have I been guilty of grossness, levity,

loose talking, flirting, improper jokes, forwardness, foolish love-making?

Have I read dangerous novels and ro-

mances?

Have I been imprudent or given disedification during courtship, or encouraged improper effrontery or indelicacy in others?

Have I not practised celibacy when bound to it by obligation?

Have I not prayed when tempted to sin against the Sixth Commandment?

Have I taken pleasure in the sight of immodest objects or encouraged sensual curiosity?

Have I indulged unchaste imagina-

tions, thoughts or desires?

Have I frequented immodest plays?

Have I uttered, given ear to, or not hindered, immodest words, and discourses? Were many present at the time, or persons of a different sex?

Have I read or heard read immodest books, songs, verses, comedies, or tracts?

Have I touched myself or others of

either sex immodestly?

Have I kissed or embraced others unchastely?

Have I procured pollution in myself or others?

Have I been guilty of wanton, bold, unrestrained laughter, looks or gestures?

Have I dressed, acted, or painted lasciviously?

Have I kept lewd company?

Have I wantonly revelled at balls, or unlawful assemblies?

Have I kept dishonest books, pictures, statues, or objects?

Have I wilfully and deliberately dwelt upon unchaste images?

Have I spoken obscenely?

Have I conveyed obscenity under words

of double meaning?

Have I abused or defiled the sanctity of marriage by shameful liberties and irregularities contrary to the order of nature?

Have I permitted such indelicate liber-

ties to be taken with me?

Have I neglected to employ the means for overcoming lewd acts, words, or desires ?*

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

Ninth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife."

Have I been guilty of inward concupiscence of the flesh, passing no further than the mind; such as wilfully taking pleasure in imagining, or desiring things which are forbidden by the Sixth Commandment?*

It would be necessary to state how far the objects aggravated or changed the guilt; such as, if the person were consecrated to God, a near relation, married or single.

Seventh and Tenth Commandments.

These are likewise negative or prohibitory precepts. They are also often classed in the same category, because they tend to a similar object. The tenth Commandment forbids in desire what the seventh prohibits in act. If the amount taken from another or unjustly detained from the lawful possessor be of considerable value, mortal sin is committed and restitution should be made to the injured person. We must consider the relative condition and circumstances of men, when taking into account what sum or value stolen would constitute a grievous sin. Of course a small amount taken from a very poor person will prove a greater relative injury to himself or to his family than a much more considerable sum stolen from a very rich person. But theologians will generally allow that, absolutely considered, and relatively to our present social condition, the theft or detention of one shilling from a poor labourer, or

• See Note, p. 75.

perhaps even less, or of two or three shillings from a mechanic or small dealer, or of double this latter amount taken from a person ordinarily reputed in comfortable circumstances, must bring the injustice committed by an offender within the guilt of mortal sin. Half a sovereign stolen from the very richest person would form a considerable matter absolutely considered; and such amount cannot be taken or kept, without the unjust possessor incurring the guilt of a grievous offence in the sight of God.

Small pilferings by a single person without the intention of accumulating a considerable amount, or when many do not conspire to take severally small sums with a view of adding all together and forming a great accumulation, may readily excuse delinquents from the commission of grievous sins. No general rule can be laid down, in determining any particular degree of injustice, so much depends on the various conditions and cir-

cumstances of different persons.

Seventh Commandment.

"Thou shalt not steal."

Have I committed robbery or theft?

Have I been guilty of forgery?

Have I been guilty of embezzlement or falsified accounts, in any public office or private trust?

Have I concealed frauds or injustices, perpetrated by others, when it was my

duty to inform?

Have I committed little thefts or pilferings, intending to increase or repeat them?

Have I opened or read the letters of others without their leave, or reasonably

presumed consent?

Have I cheated in the quality, quantity, or price of goods, even although others in trade are accustomed to act in like manner?

Have I used unfair means or tricks to

get customers?

Have I adulterated articles, especially those of food or drink, to the prejudice of customers?

Have I charged exorbitant prices, especially taking advantage of the poverty, youth, necessity, ignorance, or inexperience of a customer?

Have I injured an employer or customer, through my negligence, idleness, or culpable ignorance?

Have I made a false statement of my position in life, to the injury of others?

Have I received overchange or pay-

ment?

Have I appropriated things found by or lent to me, or have I tried to find out the owner?

Have I been guilty of any unjust spying

out or curiosity regarding the affairs of others?

Have I made hard bargains with the poor, or not given them fair prices or

wages?

Have I delayed to pay them for work done, or kept back the whole or a part of their wages for a harsh or insufficient reason?

Have I taken undue advantage of an ignorant or a poor person in purchasing works of art, antiquities, valuable MSS. or records?

Have I unjustly kept titles, leases, or deeds, from a family to whom they are of great value, or have I demanded an unreasonable price for their sale?

Have I fraudulently concealed defects in goods, animals, or other property, or told lies to the injury of a buyer or seller?

Have I given a fair price for services rendered without previous contract or engagement?

Have I caused injury or loss to any person through misrepresentation or trickery in selling goods, property, or in any other manner?

Have I defrauded my creditors?

Have I followed unlawful trades or professions?

Have I induced others to join in unlawful, deceitful, or precarious speculations?

Have I advised or entered upon an un-

just lawsuit?

Have I advanced an election or any cause by bribery, unfair arts or intimidation?

Have I restored goods only partially,

or injured the right owner?

Have I injured my family or curtailed my means of living by over expense in amusements, travel, furniture, dress, or extravagant style?

Have I neglected or deferred full restitution for any injury or injustice com-

mitted?

Have I neglected partial and reasonable restitution, if I had not the power to make full restitution?

Have I failed to make a firm resolution to restore as soon as possible, when immediate reparation cannot be made?

Have I been guilty of robbery, theft, injustice, stealth, deceit, in gaming, reckoning, buying or selling?

7

Have I defrauded in wares, prices,

scales, weights, or measures?

Have I bought, received in charge, or taken anything from those who had no right to sell or give, and which I prudently supposed or knew to have been stolen 2

Have I wilfully damaged public pro-

perty or another person's goods?

Have I spoiled or injured another's goods, through negligence, carelessness, or malice?

Have I carelessly or without a reasonable hope of payment run into debt beyond my means?

Have I done so without a purpose of

future payment?

Have I vexed others by unjust lawsnits?

Have I paid or too long deferred pay-

· ment of my lawful debts?

Have I fulfilled my lawful agreements, bargains, or promises?

Have I kept that which ought to be re-

stored?

Have I wrongfully detained another's goods?

Have I practised usury?

Have I ventured too great a sum in

wild speculations or at play?

Have I knowingly trafficked in bad bills to the loss of others or passed false money?*

Tenth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods."

Have I coveted anything belonging to another?

Have I desired, intended or projected robbery, theft or fraud?

Have I been discontented with what God has given me?

Have I been greedy of growing rich?

Have I pitied, or rather slighted, the

poor in their necessities? †

*It is here to be observed, that where two or more persons jointly injure another in goods, reputation, or in any other way, they are unitedly and severally obliged to make restitution. That is to say, they are bound to contribute their respective proportion, towards repairing such injury; and every culpable individual therein concerned is answerable before God for the whole of the injury committed, when accompliees or partners of injustice refuse to repair their respective parts of the loss caused to a neighbour. See also note p. 75.

+ See note p. 75.

Eighth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

This is a negative precept, and of course can never under any circumstances be transgressed. The sins committed against it, however, are different in degrees of veniality or enormity.

Perjury, malicious lies, and calumny, which cause a great injury or loss to a person's character or position in life, simple detraction, which unnecessarily exposes the real crime of another, with great detriment to the person detracted, contumely or public reproaches, especially against holy and venerable persons, rash judgments formed in our own minds to the loss of a person's character and just position, especially when such opinions are conveyed to others, violation of an important secret which from its nature should be considered obligatory on our concealment, are classed amongst mortal sins, which affect the observance of this Eighth Commandment.

Jocose lies or officious falsehoods which are calculated simply to serve our own or another's interest, detractions which only affect others to a slight degree, temerarious suspicions or doubts which passingly occupy our minds regarding others, the non-observance of fair promises, which however do not impose any important obligations on us, are classed amongst the venial sins committed against this Commandment.

Have I untruthfully or unjustly accused others?

Have I revealed secrets, or made known private business without a just cause?

Have I listened unlawfully to the private conversation of others?

Have I broken important promises, such as a promise of marriage, or regarding any object that seriously affects the interest, happiness, or advancement of a deserving person?

Have I made a false promise for a

wicked purpose?

Have I improperly hinted, implied, or signified what I did not intend?

Have I been guilty of mean shuffling,

equivocation, or evasion?

Have I urged others to give false testi-

mony or to forswear themselves?

Have I suppressed the truth or suggested falsehood unlawfully in my statement or conducting of a case?

Have I perjured myself or borne false

witness?

Have I called any one by false or injurious names?

Have I taken away the good name, or lessened the esteem or reputation of another by saying something false, or by reporting as true what I believed to be doubtful, or by revealing some secret sin or defect?

Have I been delighted in hearing others maligned?

Have I been grieved to hear them

praised?

Have I endeavoured to hinder rash or injurious reports?

Have I defamed or dispraised others without necessity or through malice?

Have I spoken of another's sin when

I was obliged?

Have I calumniated or told wilful and pernicious lies against any person or number of persons?

Have I delayed in restoring the fame and reputation of a person whether living or dead, to the fullest extent of my power?

Have I been meanly addicted to back-

biting?

Have I caused mischief or ill-feeling by talebearing, especially if seasoned with

untruths or exaggeration?

Have I neglected charitably to heal or repair injuries from gossiping or imprudence by putting a good or truthful in-terpretation on the manner or matter of what had been said?

Have I defended when necessary a person's good name?

Have I sowed discord by telling one

person what another said of him?

Have I flattered myself or others?

Have I judged with prejudice, partiality, or rashness?

Have I interpreted sayings or doings of others in the worst sense?

Have I concealed truth to the prejudice of others?

Have I told lies occasionally or habitually?

Have I suspected falsely or without sufficient grounds?

Have I practised dissimulation or been

too distrustful?

Have I listened willingly or complacently to backbiting, calumny or detraction?**

* See Note, p. 75.

Making thus carefully examined your conscience on violating the Ten Commandments of God, which comprise the Positive Divine Law as revealed to us in Sacred Scripture, your next care will be to consider the Capital or Deadly Sins, which are here presented in like order.

ON THE SEVEN CAPITAL OR DEADLY SINS.

These are called Capital because they are considered as the heads or sources of other sins. They are sometimes called deadly, because they are all from their intrinsic nature mortal sins, which banish God's grace from the soul. However, they are occasionally venial, either owing to the imperfection of these actions themselves, or from circumstances which diminish their enormity, or from the smallness of matter involved through their commission. The capital sins may therefore be severally considered under the following distinct heads: vis. Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, and Sloth.

I. Pride.

Pride is an inordinate and unreasonable love of one's self. A high degree of pride consists in a person assuming the conditions of grievously transgressing the Law of God and of His Church, rather than become subject to the direction of superiors; in grievously contemning or domineering over others with great injury to them; in giving way to ambitious aims calculated to produce great evils. These manifestations of pride are classed as mortal sins. Imperfect acts of pride, such as vanity, boasting, egotism, &c. are reckoned venial sins. The remedies against pride are, humility, a consideration of our own inherent weakness and imperfections, of the false nature of human esteem, and of the humility manifested by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary and other saints.

Have I taken pleasure in thinking too well of myself, boasting of my perform-

ance, influence, charities, virtues, or

qualifications?

Have I been puffed up with vain imaginations regarding my own excellence, beauty, strength, talents, rank, or position?

Did I attribute to myself any good, as if I had it from myself, and not from God?

Have I despised or contemned others,

out of conceit I had for myself?

Did I take pleasure in hearing myself

praised or flattered?

Did I desire to be esteemed by others?
Have I done good works out of com-

plaisance, self-love, pride, or vainglory?

Have I taken pride in committing sin?

Have I taken pride in committing sin?
Have I boasted of any sin, and if so, of what sin?

Have I thought myself fit for things above my ability?

Have I censured, ridiculed or resisted

my superiors?

Have I rejected or disliked admonition or correction?

Have I been disobedient or obstinate in my opinions?

Have I had a supercilious air, or

have I indulged satirical and uncharitable remarks?

Have I attempted, through ambition or presumption, to reach place or power, for which I am unsuited?

Have I found ready excuses for my

failings and mistakes?

Have I aimed at what might cause loss and injury to others by my self-aggrandisement?

Have I practised humility?

Have I set my heart upon riches, pomp, or fine clothes?

Have I regarded them more than God? Have I been accustomed to speak with vanity or pride of my own affairs or business?

Have I sounded my own praises, or

boasted my good management?

Have I been ambitious of obtaining honours and preferment, through vanity?

Did I affect to be humble, or have I

practised hypocrisy?

Did I indulge in or deceive any by

pretence or flattery?

Have I refused alms to the poor, or some request preferred to me, with bitterness, reproaches, imperious, or ill-natured language?

Have I been too proud or ungrateful,

not acknowledging past favours?

Have I contemned or looked with an insulting air, especially on my equals or inferiors?

Have I discouraged or disheartened others, especially modest and humble persons?

Have I been guilty of vanity, haughtiness, or obstinacy?

Have I indulged in flouting, scoffing, or contempt of others?*

II. Covetousness.

Covetousness is an inordinate desire of acquiring temporal goods. It is usually opposed to justice and sharity. If against the first of these virtues any grave offence be perpetrated, mortal sin would be committed through its indulgence. And again, if the practice of charity be seriously hurt owing to its influence, this sordid vice may easily involve men in a like degree of guilt. But when combined with other prudent or economical reasons, this disposition is not usually regarded as exceeding a venial offence in the sight of God. The remedies against covetousness are, a frequent consideration of the transitory nature of all earthly things, and the baseness, misery and heartlessness of such disposition in the human soul, with the practice of liberality and generosity towards the poor and dependants.

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

108 THE SEVEN CAPITAL OR DEADLY SINS.

Have I been guilty of covetousness?
Have I, according to my means, given alms?

Have I practised liberality or gene-

rosity?

Have I been guilty of meanness, greediness, niggardliness, miserable living, without pity or regard for the comfort or health of others?

Have I been contented with my own

estate?

Have I been too much attached to earthly things?

Have I heaped up money and property

by unlawful means?

Have I inordinately desired larger possessions than I have already procured?

Have I kept what is superfluous?

Have I been kind and charitably disposed towards the poor?*

^{*} See Note, p. 75. For other sins, which spring from covetousness, see also the Tenth Commandment.

III. Lust, or Luxury.*

Lust or Luxury is an inordinate desire of 'carnal pleasure. It is always a mortal sin in its nature, provided delectation be deliberate and directly desired. The remedies against Lust are, frequent prayer, constant vigilance, an humble guardianship of our senses, bodily mortification, temperance, love of purity, flying from idleness and sinful occasions, with devout frequenting of the Sacraments.

Have I been chaste, modest, and reserved in mind, manner, word, and act?

IV. Anger.

Anger is an inordinate excitement of mind, directed against any person or object, or an inordinate desire of revenge. In the latter case, this sin becomes mortal in its own nature; but in the former, it does not often exceed the guilt of a venial sin. The remedies against passion are patience, mildness, a consideration of the many evils to mind and body which follow from its indulgence, with that meekness exhibited in the actions of our Lord Jesus Christ, of His holy Mother, and of the Saints.

Have I been angry, impatient, hasty, passionate, outrageous, disdainful, or wayward?

Have I practised meekness? Have I been fretful, discontented, fond

* For sins, which spring from lust, see the Sixth and Ninth Commandments.

+ See note p. 75.



of picking quarrels, grieving immoderately, or have I been viciously obstinate?

Have I abused, quarrelled with, or struck

others?

Have I wished or threatened evil to others?

Have I provoked, or instigated others to quarrel?

Did I thus act towards parents, or superiors?*

V. Gluttony.

Gluttony is the indulgence of an inordinate appetite for esting and drinking. If by eating or drinking we impair health or reason, if by its indulgence we are rendered incapable of fulfilling important obligations, if we unlawfully transgress the laws of fasting or abstinence, then this vice urges us to the commission of grievous sin. But a moderate over indulgence in the quantity or quality of food and drink does not usually cause persons to incur this degree of guilt. The remedies which should be taken against such indulgences are, temperance, a consideration of what is due to the health both of mind and body, in our sense of taste being restrained by mortification, bearing in mind our corruptible flesh and its certain dissolution after the time of death.

Have I been guilty of gluttony, greediness, excessive eating, or drunkenness?

Have I indulged in the use of delicate

^{*} See Note, p. 75. For other ains which spring from anger, see the Fifth Commandment.

dishes, effeminacy or luxurious living, or in banqueting and feasting above my position?

Have I induced or pressed others, especially the young, to eat or drink too

much?

Have I boasted of my excesses in eating or drinking?

Have I practised temperance?

Have I broken the temperance pledge, especially when its observance would have been most necessary in my particular case?

Have I encouraged others to do so, or to exceed their prescribed allowance?

Have I ridiculed persons for their prin-

ciples of total abstinence?

Have I celebrated festivals, christenings, marriages, or funerals with drinking parties?

Have I frequented public houses or en-

couraged drinking customs?

Have I neglected to ask God's blessing before meals?

Have I neglected to return God thanks after meals?

Have I been fretful or impatient, wish-

ing Lent, Advent, or fasting days at an end?

Have I longed for the time of meals to be near, through an immortified desire for food?

Have I induced others to violate fasts or abstinence?

Have I eaten or drank to the prejudice of my reason or health?*

VI. Envy.

Envy is an inordinate grieving at another person's prosperity, or a rejoicing at evils accruing to our neighbour. It is a grievous sin in its own nature, except when slightly or passingly indulged. The remedies against envy are, magnanimity, charitable feelings exercised towards all mankind, acts of kindness, the indulgence of generous thoughts and words, the practice of justice, charity, prayer and a desire to increase the happiness of our fellow-beings.

Have I wished with jealousy for what belongs to others?

Have I cultivated brotherly love?

Did I rejoice at my neighbour's sickness, death, or misfortunes?

Have I the habit of constant fault-finding?

Have I been sorry for the prosperity of others?

* See Note, p. 75.

Did I envy their virtues?

Did I dislike the esteem and praise they had secured?

Have I been envious of their beauty, talents, riches, bodily or mental qualifications?

Have I been grieved to hear them well spoken of, or have I dispraised their persons, families, merchandize or possessions?

Did I rejoice at their hurt?*

VII. Sloth.

Sloth is an inordinate torpor of mind and body, induced by our own wilful indulgence or negligence, and especially affecting our spiritual progress, through dislike of needful exertion. If great and important duties be neglected owing to its empire over us, we are guilty of grievous sin; otherwise sins of sloth are usually considered as only venial. The remedies against this very prevalent vice are pious reading, frequent confession, rational exercise of mind and body, a thought of eternal rewards. the recompense of our active virtues, the wonderful labours of Christ and of His saints so constantly exercised or presented for our imitation and edification.

Have I passed the Sunday, or holyday, by slothfully staying in bed?

Have I neglected my duties of obliga-

tion?

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

Have I been addicted to habits of procrastination, neglect, indolence, or wasting of my time?

Did I perform duties carelessly?

Have I passed my time idly or slothfully?

Did I study my own ease too much?

Have I shown too great a remissness, by not mortifying myself?

Have I had a loathing and aversion for

the love and service of God?

Did I delay my conversion to God, or the repentance for and confession of my sins?

Have I neglected prayer, and the other

means necessary to secure salvation?

Have I led an evil life, without a purpose of amendment?

Did I lose my time in idle vanities,

amusements, or foolish pursuits?

Did I neglect things given to me in charge?

Have I practised diligence and been in-

dustrious ?

Was I ungrateful to God for His benefits?

Have I neglected to pray for repose of

the souls of parents, relatives, benefactors, and faithful departed?

Have I chosen to want rather than to

labour for my living?

Have I been inconstant in good purposes?

Have I been unthankful to friends or

benefactors?

Have I been guilty of indevotion, laziness, frivolity, idle visiting, gossiping, drowsiness, or sleepiness?*

The natural law, being in accordance with God's will, should direct human conscience to the performance of good actions according to the rules of right reason, as manifested by our undepraved intelligence. The capital sins already indicated in detail are especially opposed to the true law of nature. Your next care will be to examine yourself regarding the commission of sins against the six general precepts of the Church. The Ecclesiastical Law has been promulgated by authority of the Church, in accordance with the privileges of her Divine commission, to direct Christian society to a common spiritual good, and to the enjoyment of eternal happiness. The general and special provisions of this law are usually found in the canons and ritual decrees,

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

THE SIX PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH.

First Precept.

To hear Mass on Sundays and all holy-days of obligation.

The substance of these six following precepts of the Church, in the manner she has prescribed, is binding on all the faithful under pain of mortal sin. For, as Christ Himself says: He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican. (Matt. xviii. 17.) Hence it will be necessary to make a declaration to our confessor regarding that particular Precept or Law of the Church which has been broken, or the extent to which it has been negligently or wilfully violated, with the number of times it has not been observed. Circumstances of the sin, such as scandal accruing, &c. are oftentimes subjects for accusation, in connection with this examination.

If we simply hear Mass on all Sundays and Holydays of Obligation, this First Precept of the Church is fulfilled. The Holydays of Obligation are different in various countries. Theologians are generally agreed that it is a grievous sin to omit the beginning of Mass to the Offertory inclusively; or to be absent from the Consecration, or from the Gospel and Communion, &c. all allowing that these are notable parts of the Holy Sacrifice. This precept has also a reference to the Third Commandment of God's Law, as we have already noticed.

Have I neglected or refused to hear Mass on Sundays or holydays of obligation?

Have I been absent or late for a considerable part of the Mass on Sundays or holydays of obligation, and without lawful excuse?*

Second Precept.

To fast and abstain on the days com-

On days so ordered by the Church we are obliged to fast or abstain, according to general rules binding on us

by her authority.

The law of Fasting regards the quantity of food. It requires that only one full meal and one collation be taken on the same day. The full meal is not to be eaten until after noon or midday. This law binds all who have completed the twenty-first year, and not entered on their sixtieth year. Exceptions to this class of persons are allowed, under certain conditions, as afterwards stated.

The law of Abstinence regards the quality of the food and not the quantity. It forbids, at any time of the day, the use of certain food, generally meat and things made from meat, as soups, &c. Some few days of the year, as Ash-Wednesday, Spy-Wednesday, Good Friday, abstinence extends to eggs, butter, cheese, and what is made out of them, known as white meats. The law of abstinence binds all who have come to the use of reason until death. Of course, when there is serious illness in question, this law will not oblige to the injury of the patient; and exemption may be obtained from pastors of the Church, when there is a grave reason.

The laws of fasting and abstinence may or may not fall on the same day; thus every Friday in the year is a

* See Note, p. 75.

day of abstinence from meat. Hence meat cannot be used at any time of that day, and we may take as many meats as we think proper. On the other hand, Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent are days of abstinence, for meat is not allowed at any meal; and they are also fast days, as only one meal and one collation are permitted.

The customs of different ages and countries have modified or restrained the nature and obligation of this strict fast. The moderate use of any liquid, taken simply in common life to assuage thirst, and not as a nourishing substitute for food, is allowed at all times. The collation, which is to be estimated at only part of a full meal, should not exceed eight ounces of solid food, this quantity being deemed not excessive in the opinion of St. Liguori. Those customs or dispensations which modify the strict law of fasting and its observances in the matter of food, vary in different dioceses, and are best learned from annual announcements of the bishop, as directed to his clergy and laity.

The following classes of persons are not obliged to fast on one meal and a collation; viz. poor mendicants, or those depending on casual charity, who cannot, morally speaking, provide what would be requisite to constitute a suitable meal at regular intervals; sickly, infirm, and convalescent persons, whose health would suffer if not allowed a sufficient quantity of food; those who labour hard, such as ordinary workmen and mechanics, who are obliged to exert great bodily strength at their daily avocations; ordinary household servants, actively engaged waiters or porters, obliged to be on foot a very considerable time with a certain exhaustion of strength; pregnant women or those such-

* Such as ploughmen, threshers, diggers.

⁺ Such as stonemasons, carpenters, smiths, &c. Tailors, type-setters, watchmakers, &c. are hardly exempt, owing to the greater relative lightness of their employments.

[‡] Such as cooks, housemaids, or maid-servants of allwork, &c. Footmen, house-stewards, ladies' maids are not considered exempt.

ling children, who require sufficient nourishment in such condition; those who for a just reason are obliged to travel on foot over fifteen miles a day; missioners or preachers who are daily or very frequently engaged each week in discharging necessary spiritual duties, or confessors who are engaged many successive days in hearing penitents, and whose labours exhaust mind or body; literary teachers who are obliged to devote considerable time and fatigue to the duties of their office. According to the general opinion of theologians, persons over sixty years of age are not obliged to fast.

All the faithful who have attained the use of reason, and not otherwise exempt by necessity or dispensation, are obliged to abstain in the quality of food, even when allowed the usual number of meals. The custom of each diocese, as to the quality of food permitted, can be easily

learned.

Have I eaten more than one meal and one collation on fast days, when strictly obliged to fast?

Have I conformed to requirements established by lawful authority or custom, regarding the Lent, Advent, or other Fasting Days, or Days of Abstinence?

Have I exceeded the collation allowed by custom, or on the authority of respectable and sound theologians, on fasting days?

Have I eaten flesh meat or other food prohibited to be used on days of abstinence?**

* See Note, p. 75.

Third Precept.

To confess our sins at least once a year,

If we make a good Confession to a lawfully constituted priest once each year, and usually within the time prescribed for the fulfilment of this duty in the ecclesiastical province to which we belong, this Church precept is duly fulfilled. From the time we arrive at the use of reason, this annual duty is obligatory on each Catholic. By a law of the Fourth General Council of Lateran, those persons who may neglect such practice are declared liable to be excommunicated whilst living, and if dying in that state they are to be deprived of Christian burial.

Have I neglected to confess my sins, once at least each year, and with the necessary dispositions?*

Fourth Precept.

To receive worthily the Blessed Eucharist at Easter, or within the time appointed, from our own pastor and within our own parish church.

The same ecclesiastical censure is directed against those who do not fulfil the fourth as against those neglecting the third Church Precept. All the faithful who are judged of sufficient age and capacity must receive worthily the Blessed Eucharist at Easter, or within the time allotted for complying with this duty in the ecclesiastical province to which they belong. The time set apart for the fulfilment of such duty is usually extended

* See Note p. 75,

in these countries from the beginning of Lent to a period terminating before or after midsummer; so that abundant opportunity may be afforded to all Catholics, who are numerically great in proportion to the pastors ministering to their spiritual necessities. It must be observed that this Paschal Precept can only be complied with by Catholics, in their own parish churches. The parochial clergy attached to these churches are specially privileged to administer Easter Communion to those residing within the bounds of their respective parishes.

Have I neglected to receive Holy Communion at the time of Easter, or within the period prescribed by the Church, and in that particular parish church to which I belong?*

Fifth Precept.

To contribute to the support of our pastors.

This precept is not obligatory on the very poor, but only on those who can afford, in equitable proportions, and according to established regulations, what is deemed requisite for the decent support of the ministers of religion and parochial religious establishments.

Have I neglected to contribute towards the decent support of my pastor, having the capability of so doing?

Have I given too small a portion of my means, for the wants of his mission and

^{*} See Note p. 75.

for the support of his corporal necessities?

Have I sought to evade my obligations or obstruct diocesan regulations made for his maintenance, and to preserve the decency of religion?*

Sixth Precept.

Not to solemnize marriage at forbidden times, nor to marry persons within the forbidden degrees of kindred, nor to marry clandestinely, nor in a manner otherwise prohibited by the Church.

As applying to the laity, the fulfilment of this precept requires from all the faithful about to enter the matrimonial state an avoidance not only of those impediments which would render marriage null and of no effect, but of those impediments which render it illegal, even although binding on the parties contracting, once the contract has taken place. Matrimonial engagements imply a free and full consent between those contracting, and should be entered into with great deliberation. It would always be desirable to ascertain long before if any impediments intervene to prevent their lawful or valid celebration. For this purpose, it would be well to seek the advice of a prudent director, and especially in cases of doubt or difficulty.

The following four impediments, called merely impeding, render marriage unlawful, and consequently grievously sinful; although after the marriage contract has taken place, if no other impediment supervene, such

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

marriage holds good. 1. A Prohibition of the Church, for various just reasons. It is required, owing to some particular cause, as when a bishop or parish priest prevents a marriage taking place, until necessary enquiries be made, to remove all danger of illegality or nullity; or it is required, for some general reason, as that the just consent of parents may be obtained, that it may not be contracted without a proper publication of or dispensation from the hanns, or that marriage do not take place between a Catholic and Protestant. 2. The Time. The Council of Trent forbids a solemnization of marriage from the first Sunday of Advent to the Feast of Epiphany, inclusively; and from Ash Wednesday to Low Sunday, inclusively; such solemnization presupposing the solemn nuptial benediction given, public wedding feasts or a conspicuous departure to the bride's new home. But there is no prohibition to have parties semi-privately married by the proper parish priest, although custom restricts this usage in various places. 3. An existing Promise of Marriage, known as Sponsalia. Whether seriously contracted between a marriageable man and woman, with ecclesiastical ceremonies, or in a private manner, such promise of marriage holds good between both parties, unless mutually and lawfully withdrawn, or naturally dissolved, owing to some just intervening cause. 4 A vow. This is distinguished in a four-fold manner, viz., a vow of chastity, a vow of virginity, a vow of entering into a religious state, and a vow of assuming sacred orders. In these latter cases, a person bound by a vow of chastity, would sin grievously by entering the married state, with an intention of transgressing this vow by consummation of marriage; or even omitting this purpose on one side, there is a manifest danger of either violating such vow or just rights of the other companion; a person, bound by a vow of virginity, or a vow to remain unmarried, would sin grievously by entering the married state, but having once contracted marriage, the observance of this vow has no further binding force; a person bound by a vow of entering into a religious state, would sin grievously, as well by deceiving a companion, as by exposure to the danger of violating personally a vow

already made. And, again, such person would sin grievously, if, before the consummation of marriage, whilst yet at liberty to do so, the vow made be not fulfilled; however, after such consummation, without mutual consent or death of the other companion, this vow taken, cannot be observed any longer. A person, bound by a vow of taking sacred orders, would sin grievously by getting married, but, if he obtain the free consent of his wife, he would be required to fulfil his previous vow; or having engaged in this new state, not being able to accomplish his first purpose, the consummation of marriage is allowed. In one of the previous cases, that arising from valid sponsalia, no dispensation can be obtained: the Sovereign Pontiff himself not having this power, as it regards a matter of strict justice, obliging both parties. In other cases, dispensations are often required in practice, and should be sought from the ecclesiastical superior, privileged to grant them.

The following fifteeen impediments, known as diriment, render marriage null and of no effect; because they directly impose obstacles to a matrimonial contract. owing to defect of conditions absolutely required by ecclesiastical law for its validity. 1. Error. Any substantial fraud or mistake, even an invincible one, regarding one person being taken for a different person, as if a man resolving to contract a marriage with Mary should find the ceremony gone through with Anne; because the very law of nature in such cases indicates an interference with liberty of the will as affecting the substance of a most important engagement. But any error regarding the quality or qualifications of a person, per se, will not annul marriage. 2. Condition. If one of the contracting parties be a slave and the other of free condition, this latter being deceived in the matter, such marriage becomes null. Happily it is to be hoped, the general abolition of slavery in most civilized countries will soon render this ecclesiastical law nearly obsolete. 3. Vow. A solemn vow of chastity made by profession in an approved religious order, voluntarily and deliberately taken, and with a real intention of adhering to it, annuls any marriage afterwards contracted. 4, Kindred. This is either natural, spiritual, or legal. Consanguinity, or natural relationship in a direct line from the parent stock, will indefinitely exclude matrimonial engagements; or in a collateral line from the parent stock relations to the fourth degree inclusively cannot contract. Foriritual kindred or relationship arises between ceftain persons determined by canon law, after the administration of baptism or confirmation: thus the minister of either sacrament and the baptized or confirmed, or the parents of these latter, cannot contract marriage between themselves; nor can the godfather or godmother contract marriage with the godchild or its parents. Legal kindred or relationship, known as perfect. Sexists when a

^{*}Thus, no man or woman could marry any ancestor or descendant, traceable in a direct line of ascent or descent.

⁺ Beyond such degree the prohibition does not at present extend. So that persons known as third cousins cannot marry without dispensation, whilst fourth cousins do not require such dispensation. Brothers and sisters are said to be in the first degree from a common stock (father and mother); first cousins are in the second degree of consanguinity, &c.

[†] The godfather and! godmother are not prevented from marrying each other. Nor do those who merely stand as sponsors for others contract any spiritual relationship. But certain conditions are required that sponsors should contract: such relationship, viz. that they are baptized, as otherwise they do not fall under the operation of Church laws; that they have reached years of discretion, as otherwise they would be unfit for the office imposed on them; that they have been appointed by parents or by the parish priest of the place. Other reservations are likewise made,

[§] Imperfect legal relationship (as when one adopted only acquires a right of heirship to the adopting party, but who is not placed under the jurisdiction or does not enter as a member of the latter person's family) is not

126 THE SIX PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH.

person having perfect control of his or her own actions, passes by a proper legal form under the jurisdiction and into the family of one adopting, thus acquiring all the legitimate rights of a child. This legal relationship annuls marriage in the following cases: i. As in a right line between the adopting person and the adopted, and children of the latter, (at least whilst these children are under parental jurisdiction) similar to the case of natural kindred, ii. As in a collateral line, between the adopted and the children of the adopting person, at least whilst these children are under parental control. iii. And as in a right line according to the rule of affinity, between the adopting person and wife of the adopted, or vice versa, between the adopted person and wife of the adopting, marriage is not allowed. 5. Crime. If one of the married parties commit real, t formal, t and consummated adultery with another person, having a mutual understanding to marry each other at some future time; if there be a promise of marriage made by one of the parties so offending and accepted by the other, at least by some sign, whether such promise precede, accompany or follow the crime committed, provided it had not been retracted before commission of this sin; and if the promise of marriage and adultery have taken place during

regarded as a diriment impediment of matrimony between such individuals, according to the general opinion of theologians.

^{*} This impediment to marriage was first established in the Roman or civil law, and was afterwards incorporated in the ecclesiastical or canon law.

⁺ That is, at least either of the offenders should be united in lawful wedlock.

[†] That is, both of the offenders should know that one of them at least is married.

[§] That is, there must exist an undoubted, and not merely imperfect, carnal connexion between the offeuders.

the life-time of the former spouse; with such conditions existing, a marriage between the offending parties would become void. Or, if there be a mutual conspiracy between two offending persons, to take away the life of the spouse of either, when the homicide of such spouse follows owing to the physical or moral complicity of either, marriage between the guilty persons cannot afterwards take place. Again, if adultery and homicide be found united in any particular case of this nature. even without mutual conspiracy and promise of marriage betweeen the offenders, ecclesiastical law annuls any matrimonial engagement into which they may afterwards enter. 6. Disparity of worship. No marriage contract can take place between a baptized and an unbaptized person. 7. Fear. If one of the parties be compelled to marry the other, through great and unjustly inflicted fear, + coming from an external and freely produced cause, such marriage would be void. 8. Sacred Orders. Any man advanced to the order of subdeaconship, or to any other superior grade of Holy Orders in the Church, cannot afterwards marry. 9. An existing bond of marriage. Whilst this continues during the common life-time of both parties, no new contract of marriage can take place; but certain and authentic proofs of the death of a husband or wife will leave the survivor free to contract another lawful engagement. 10. Public Decency. sort of impediment arises from a certain alliance or appearance of affinity, owing to valid sponsalia between one spouse and the relations of the other, and this reaches to the first degree of consanguinity, as also owing to marriage ratified between one of the married persons and kindred of the other, which reaches to the fourth degree of consanguinity. 11. Age. The age required by canon law for the validity of marriage is twelve years

^{*} This impediment does not regard marriage contracted between Catholics and baptized Protestants or Sectaries.

⁺ A slight fear, even when unjustly excited, would not invalidate marriage.

completed for females, and fourteen years completed for males. 12. Affinity. This impediment arises from consummated marriage or from illicit and perfect carnal connexion. In the former case the husband or wife cannot contract marriage with each others' relations, to the fourth degree of kindred inclusively; in the latter . case, whether it be a question of adultery or fornication, either of the two offending parties cannot contract marriage with relatives of the other, within the second degree of consanguinity. 13, Clandestinely. In every diocese where this following decree of the Council of Trent has been duly promulgated, such an impediment exists: "Those who attempt the contract of marriage otherwise than in presence of a parish priest, or another priest with leave of their bishop or parish priest, with two or three witnesses, are rendered incapable of contracting by the Holy Synod, and it decrees, that contracts of this nature are void and null." 14. Impotence. This impediment existing antecedent to an alliance, and irremovable, whether absolute or relative, as regarding one or both of the parties, renders marriage null by the law of nature, for an object of marriage thereby becomes impossible. 15. Raptus. Under this Latin heading is understood that there be a violent or forcible abduction of a female from a safe place to some other place, where she is detained under the power of her abductor with a view of forcing her to marry him.

^{*} By the parish priest must here be understood, the pastor of one or other of these contracting parties. This jurisdiction of a parish priest is established by the actual habitual domicile or quasi-domicile in his parish of either or both of the contracting parties. A month's residence in a parish previous to marriage is required to constitute a domicile; or the commencement of residence there, with the intention of remaining the time required, or some notable time, constitutes quasi-domicile.

^{*} A triple condition 'is required that such impediment be incurred: viz. 1. That the female be brought some

There are various collateral questions bearing on the foregoing impediments, and several principles to guide practical decisions, which would be misplaced in a work of this kind. Regarding all impediments arising from the natural law, no dispensation can be obtained. But the Pope has power to dispense from all merely canonical or ecclesiastical impediments, validly and licitly, whilst by concession of a council or the Pope, or from custom tolerated, a bishop has power to dispense from certain matrimonial impediments. If cases of doubt arise in reference to marriage ratification or use, such matters should be submitted for the opinion and advice of a prudent director.

Have I solemnized marriage at prohibited times, or in an unlawful manner, thereby departing from ecclesiastical usages?

Have I married any of my kinsfolk, or relations, within the prohibited degrees of kindred or affinity?

Have I married or desired to marry one not in communion with the Church?

Did I encourage others to act in this manner?

Have I illegally contracted marriage, whilst any impedient impediment existed, in any of the four different ways already explained?

considerable distance, and not from one part of a house to another. 2. That she be brought away for no other purpose than to be married. 3. And that such violent abduction be against the struggles of the female, or whilst she is altogether averse to the object sought.

9

Have I invalidly contracted marriage, whilst any diriment impediment existed, in any of the fifteen different ways already explained?

Did I neglect to apply for a dispensation when necessary to be obtained?*

OBLIGATIONS OF DIFFERENT STATES IN LIFE.

In addition to the general precepts or rules of religion and morality, binding on all Christians, there are special obligations, referring to particular states or professions, which must be regarded in the Examination of Conscience. As it will only be possible to indicate the most prevalent conditions and occupations of life, in these following preliminary instructions and questions respecting special sins or duties, other situations or particular obligations, having more or less affinity to those named, will naturally suggest themselves to persons peculiarly interested.

Duties of Parents, Guardians, or Superiors, especially towards children.

"But if a man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. v. 8.)

* See Note, p. 75.

By the natural and Divine law, parents are obliged to love and educate their children. Love towards these must be heartfelt, efficacious and well-ordered. Hence. parents should not be inflamed with anger, disdain, or imprecatory passion against children. Parents generally sin grievously by transgressing the following rules of conduct. They should not call children by injurious or reproachful names, nor manifest their secret faults or defects to strangers; neither should they unjustry prefer or favour one child above another, bear hatred, dislike, or practise cruelty and unfeeling conduct, or inflict wounds in correcting them. Such treatment is sure to deprave or demoralise children, and make them passionate, morose, disobedient, contumacious; and it occasions brawls, quarrels, divisions, uncharitableness, and innumerable evils in the bosom of families. Nor should parents treat children with any inordinate affection or over-indulgence, by giving or permitting to them favours they should not obtain, through a fear of making them sad or ill-tempered; firm, prudent, and strict discipline is often required to exact obedience, and easy good nature or parental affection may often lead parents seriously to neglect their duties. especially when it would be necessary to enforce the observance of God's holy law. Parents when able should equitably help their children if in necessity, not incurred through their own fault. Education, whether religious or secular, must be afforded children, and in a manner suitable to their state and requirements. parents must take heed, from the very time of conception to avert all evils or accidents accruing, and to take care that no danger to life or health happen to their offspring. Parents should also provide for children food, clothing, and maintenance, suitable to their rank and condition. Parents are likewise bound to place their children in such a state, as would enable them to live honestly and in a manner that accords with their fortunes or reasonable expectations. With respect to religious education, parents are obliged, either personally or through good teachers, to have their children in early youth sufficiently instructed in the Christian Doctrine. Their hearts must be inclined to faith and the love of God, through morning and evening prayer, through a knowledge and observance of God's Commandments and Precepts of the Church, by frequenting Mass, catechism-classes, the Sacraments, and other religious devotious. They should be kept from the society of bad companions, from conversation and reading calculated to injure faith or morals, from dangerous plessures, vanities, and amusements. In fine, parents are required, when necessary, to administer moderate and prudent correction, and always to give their children good example.

Other kindred and superiors, who assume the relation of guardians or protectors to children, generally speaking, are bound to the performance of similar duties in their regard. However, this must be understood as applying in some modified proportion, according to nearness of relationship, exactness of contract, constant

or casual supervision and direction.

Have I wasted in useless, extravagant, or vicious expenditure, money needed for the health, education, clothing or maintenance of my children?

Have I shown any unjust preference to

one child over another?

Have I unjustly or capriciously excluded one child, or more than one, from the

provisions of a will?

Have I deferred too long, and without necessity, the baptism of a child, or have I through neglect suffered one to die without baptism?

Have I treated step-children with un-

kindness or neglect?

Have I neglected to give children prudent, good tempered, or charitable correction?

Have I cruelly or passionately corrected or ill used them?

Have I punished them severely for trifling faults, or for accidents, as if they were offences?

Have I slept in the same bed with an infant, without taking proper care to pre-

vent accident or injury?

Have I, contrary to the rules of propriety, allowed brothers and sisters to sleep together, or parents, adults, and children of a different sex?

Have I allowed a child to receive imprudent visits from those of another sex, especially when left alone?

Have I allowed children to be out late

at night?

Have I watched them carefully to see how they spent their time, and in what place or company?

Have I left them in charge of giddy, irreligious, or immoral masters, mistresses,

teachers or servants?

Have I neglected their religious and secular instruction?

Have I taught them their catechism and

prayers at an early age?

Have I neglected to have them prepared for confession, confirmation, and holy communion, at a suitable age?

Have I sent them to bad schools, or places of resort, dangerous to morals and faith?

taith 7

Have I allowed them to read bad books, or indulge in any improper practices?

Have I neglected to inspire them with a fear of sin, or a love of God and holy observances?

Have I neglected to cultivate a love of virtue in their souls, or neglected to give them good advice on suitable occasions?

Have I indulged in passion or bad ex-

ample before them?

Have I censured before them a parent, a clergyman, a superior, or a master?

Have I thoughtlessly and unnecessarily

fretted, teased or frightened children?

Have I spoken or argued imprudently, or have I foolishly praised or discouraged them, when they were present?

Have I spoiled them by petting, by

fickleness, by over indulgence, by indifference, by want of firmness, or by aggravating words?

Have I unjustly hindered their marriage, or forced them to marry against

their consent?

Have I hindered their vocation when called to an ecclesiastical or to a religious state of life?

Have I urged them to embrace any such condition of life, when they had no vocation for it?

Have I neglected to pray for them, or not taught them to join in family prayer? Have I forced children into some pro-

Have I forced children into some profession, trade, situation, or calling, for which they felt a natural and constitutional aversion?

Have I put them in a position or service, where they could not comply with their religious duties, or where faith and morals were endangered?

Have I brought them up at a distance from a Catholic church or school, when other provision for their instruction could have been made?

Have I improperly interfered in matters out of my province, such as in preventing an approach to holy communion, when the spiritual director of children or dependants gave them permission to receive the Blessed Sacrament?*

Duties of Children, Wards and Dependants.

"Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing to the Lord." (Col. iii. 20.)

"Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but from God, and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." (Rom. xiii. 1, 2.)

Children are bound from their hearts to love, to obey, in all things not sinful, and to reverence their parents, as also to manifest externally on suitable occasions, these good feelings. Hence, children sin grievously against this love, who entertain or show hatred to parents by outward signs; who harshly speak to or treat them, by word, look or action; who show no love towards them when occasion requires; who wish their deafh owing to hatred, or wishing to enjoy their property, or to live more freely and to be released from their guardianship; who greatly detract them before others, especially strangers; who by fear, fraud, or other unjust methods would prevent them from making a just disposition of

^{*} See Note p. 75.

their property; who provoke them to anger or cause deep sorrow, without a fair or grave reason, and especially to the injury of their health or peace of mind; who compel them to beg or practise some means of obtaining a livelihood not suited to their condition : who do not visit and console them seasonably when old, afflicted, or infirm; who take little care to provide for the administration of sacraments when in danger of death; or who will not mark their respect and duty, when parents are dead, by having their funeral solemnities, offices, or the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, celebrated in a manner suitable to their condition in life. Children often sin grievously against obedience due to parents. who do not regard their admonitions to frequent at suitable intervals Mass, the Sacraments, religious offices and prayers; who refuse to do what respects the good government or peace of a family, or who wish that everything should be managed according to their own notions, disregarding parental control; who speak rudely or arrogantly; who will not devote their time to studies. pursuits, or arts suitable to their condition; who render useless those expenses incurred for their education; who frequent public dancing or gambling houses, taverns, or theatres, sgainst the prohibition or will of parents; or who walk abroad at night, and converse at that hour alone or in lonely places with young and especially wanton persons of a different sex. Yet a want of consideration, defect of age, a natural levity of disposition. or the insignificance of a matter in question, will often excuse children from the guik of mortal sin. such fault should be committed against obedience due to parents, theologians usually require at least the ap-pearance of strict parental orders, and not merely persussion, request, or the indication or expression of a father's or mother's will. The manner in which a pre-cept is enforced can easily be inferred from the serious or indifferent way in which an order is given, from the necessity or importance of the thing commanded, from the penalty annexed, or from many other circumstances. In certain matters, children are not obliged to obey the irrational will of their parents, as in the choice of a state in life, contrary to that one to which they are evidently called by God; although in pursuit of this calling, circumstances may arise to prevent its immediate fulfilment, as when poor parents require children to remain with them. for the purpose of providing maintenance, or special assistance. Children usually sin grievously against the precept of reverence towards parents, who curse, revile, contradict, or insult them by contumacious, very proud, or offensive words and actions; who anger or grieve them greatly by mocking reproaches, derision. studied discourtesy, threatening words, looks, or actions; who raise any weapon, or their hands, or who strike passionately, or in a menacing manner, even although little or no bodily injury be inflicted; who refuse to recognize or who treat them in public as unknown persons or strangers, or who feel ashamed of them when poor, ignorant, unfortunate, or badly clothed. There are just reasons sometimes for not manifesting recognition; but pride and contempt for parents must never be exhibited. It may be, that levity of disposition, inconsiderateness, or excreme youth, will remove the amount of malice that would cause irreverent words or actions to be regarded as mortal sins.*

Have I to accuse myself of any of the sins pointed out in the examination of

* It may be remarked that the duties of children towards parents, guardians, or superiors, are expressly and primarily involved in an observance of the Fourtn Commandment. Under that head will be found appropriate instructions and questions for an examination of their conscience. In a secondary or implied sense, the duties of subjects, subordinates, servants, &c., are also there indicated. It must be understood, that parents and superiors have relative duties to discharge towards children and dependants, so that the good order necessary for the well-being of society may be preserved and practised.

conscience under the head of the Fourth Commandment?*

Duties of Brothers and Sisters.

"He that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?" (1 John iv. 20.)

Brothers and sisters should mutually love, respect, and assist each other, owing to the very near kindred existing between them. Not only in extreme, but even in great necessity, such an intimate family relationship requires a more fortunate brother or sister to give good counsel and help to one less prosperous,

Have I always taken care to cultivate fraternal charity and kindly intercourse with brothers or sisters?

Have I given good advice or afforded just assistance when necessary?

Have I done anything injurious to their interests ? †

Mutual duties of Husband and Wife.

"Let wives be subject to their husbands: that if any believe not the word, they may be won without the word, by the conversation of the wives. Considering your chaste conversation with fear.***

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

Ye husbands, likewise dwelling with them according to knowledge, giving honour to the female as to the weaker vessel, and as to the coheirs of the grace of life: that your prayers be not hindered." (1. Pet. iii. 1, 2, 7.)

Marriage, being a hely institution and a great Sacrament, it must always be received in the state of grace, and for this reason, contracting parties should prepare for its devout reception by a life of innocence, and by a previous approach to the Sacrament of Penance, and, if possible, on the very morning of their union, to Holy Communion. The most perfect modesty and reserve should prevail between affianced persons, in thought, word and act. When a person is resolved to enter into this state, he should implore God's assistance to guide him in the choice of a suitable and religious companion. When about to contract marriage, it should be with a Catholic: for the Church has always condemned mixed marriages, as most frequently producing the worst consequences to married persons and to their children. If, however, such a marriage have taken place, on no account are children born of it allowed to be brought up, in any other than the Catholic Religion. The advice and consent of parents or guardians ought to be asked, and, if possible, obtained. Persons should resolve to enter into this holy state, not merely from sensual gratification or through an earthly motive; but rather with a desire to promote the honour of God and the sanctification of their own souls and those of their children.

In the beginning of the world, the Almighty instituted this condition of Matrimony as a natural or civil contract; but our Lord Jesus Christ, in the New Law, elevated this state to the dignity of a Sacrament, that married persons might be sanctified the more and enabled to discharge religiously all duties required of them. Its reception thus enables them to preserve inviolable mutual fidelity and respect, whilst living together in union.

peace and love. It aids them to vanquish every unlawful desire and to correct the inconstancy of human nature. It gives them grace to subdue or regulate the motions of concupiscence, to avoid impropriety or any thing inconsistent with the sancity of their state, to soften asperities of temper, to bear with each other's defects, to purify and ennoble natural affection. It also bestows grace to discharge well a most important duty, if God bless their union with children, that these should be trained up in His fear and love. Hence, the great necessity for avoiding at first a sacrilegious marriage; and afterwards for preserving God's blessing and grace, by constant prayer and persevering exertions.

After all necessary preliminaries have been religiously arranged, the contracting parties should enter the Church with great reverence and recollection. Approaching the Altar, to ratify their solemn engagement, according to the form prescribed, with humble and sincere devotion, they must receive the blessing of God's minister. When leaving the Church, afterwards, they should entertain sentiments of great respect for this Holy Sacrament and of gratitude to God for all His mercies. They should be especially careful to avoid dissipation, improper jokes or remarks, sinful diversions or any intemperance, on the day of their marriage. They ought, as time progresses, frequently meditate on obligations they have assumed, and enquire if their duties

have been efficiently and devoutly performed.

Husbands and wives should bear in mind, that God Almighty having destined marriage to be the sole legitimate means, whereby the human race should be propagated and continued, they should avoid in its use irregular or unnatural desires or actions; they should especially avoid and discountenance the odious vice of Onanism, so called from Onan, whose crime is reprobated in the thirty-eighth chapter of Genesis; they should not seek the use of marriage when bound by a vow of chastity, or by spiritual kindred or affinity, contracted by themselves, unless a dispensation be first obtained; but the use of marriage is allowed to one of the parties, not specially prevented by any previous con-

dition;—they should cautiously use their conjugal rights, during the wife's state of pregnancy, lest abortion or any other danger of health might accrue to her.

Husbands and wives are bound to conjugal society, cohabitation and mutual love. They are obliged to concerl each other's secret faults, to afford each other that maint-nance suited to their position in life, and to

avoid all causes of quarrel.

Both parents should take care not to injure tender infants, who sleep with them in the same bed, and they should foresee that no misfortune accrue to children by fire, water, ferocious animals, dangerous instruments. If children, whether legitimate or illegitimate, be placed in public orphanages or in miserable establishments, when necessity or care of reputation does not require such economy; if they are driven away from their homes, by cruelty or unfeeling conduct, whilst they are yet unsuited for a struggle with the world; if they are compelled to beg or practice some low employment, not suited to their parentage; if they are not reasonably assisted in necessity, until by industry and opportunity, they are able to surmount some unforeseen difficulty; if they are not helped to a condition of life consonant to their position, by being taught or qualified in some suitable art, trade, business, or profession; if they are left without means through sloth, negligence, extravagance, drinking, or imprudent speculations: if they are deprived of a suitable dowry or provision when about to enter the married state, or become religious; in all these foregoing cases. the guilt of mortal sin is incurred.

Parents sin grievously, if desirous of acquiring temporal possessions for themselves and children, they lose all concern about the necessary religious or secular instruction of children, or if they are guilty of using obscene or blasphemous expressions, curses or maledictions in their presence. In such instances, they sin against more than one commandment. And, in general, Catholic parents sin grievously, who allow their children to attend schools, where there is danger of perversion. The same observation applies, when the teacher belongs to a dif-

ferent creed, or when he is notoriously immoral, or when he inculcates bad maxims or morals.

Lesser faults than those here particularized usually

excuse from the commission of grievous sin:

Have I entered the holy state of matrimony through false pretences or unlawful motives ?

Have I lived separate, or remained a long time absent from my companion, without just cause and without presumed consent?

Have I improperly refused to render the marriage debt, or to be reconciled after any enmity?

Have I indulged a habit of secrecy in little matters, or concealed a thing of importance without just reason?

Have I by levity or unkindness given

cause for jealousy?

Have I rashly accused my companion, or have I been jealous without just cause?

Have I by freedom of manner, action, or conversation, by immedesty or imprudence, scandalized or disedified my companion or other persons?

Is there any want of kindness, cheerful-

ness, and love, on my part?*

* See note p. 75. Also, refer for further Special Examination of Conscience to questions at pp. 90 to 98.

Special duties of Husband.

"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter towards them." (Col. iii. 19.)

A husband is required to exert himself industriously and with intelligence, to procure the chief means of living; he must manage his own and his wife's property with care and fidelity; he must influence his wife to comply with all her religious duties; he must prudently but charitably and affectionately advise and reason with his wife, when she may have been guilty of any great crime or scandal, being careful to preserve good temper. and in no case to indulge in violent passion or to inflict corporal punishment. Hence a husband must undoubtedly be guilty of grievous sin, who would prevent his wife from complying with the Divine and Ecclesiastical Law, from assisting at Mass or suitable devotions, or from frequenting the Sacraments. If he refuse to cohabit with her; if he call her by harsh or dishonest names. especially in public; if he neglect to furnish the means necessary for family support; if he treat her with tyrannical or very uncourteous conduct: should he fail notably in any of these duties, he cannot be excused from the guilt of grievous sin. In like manner, husbands who impose over exertion on their wives, who illuse them by ruffianly manners or conduct, and especially by blows or pushes. During her time of child-bearing. the husband should pray devoutly for the spiritual and temporal safety of his wife. He should be very careful, to avoid the least possible injury to her health or peace of mind, and to remove every occasion or cause, that might prove in any manner prejudicial.

Have I treated my wife in a gross, tyrannical, unmanly, or cruel manner? Have I endeavoured to procure for her recreation or comforts suited to my means and her condition?

Have I made her unhappy by neglect, coldness, want of confidence, vicious indulgence, or by spending my leisure time from home, or much in the company of other women 2*

Special duties of Wife.

"Wives, be subject to your husbands, as it behoveth in the Lord." (Col. iii. 18.)

A wife is obliged, under penalty of mortal sin, not to greatly vex, grieve, mock, or aggravate her husband by using injurious or reproachful words, not to become habitually contumacious or disobedient, nor by sullenness to provoke his wrath, nor urge him to blasphemy or imprecation.

During the time of child-bearing, a knowledge of possible danger or anticipated responsibility should cause a wife to be regular and fervent in prayer. She should frequently go to Confession, and direct her Communions for the obtaining of some spiritual good or blessing suitable to her existing condition. Through dislike or fear of child-bearing, a wife should never excite or expose her husband to the danger of Onanism or incontinency. She ought always endeavour to prevent and to turn his mind from every evil indulgence, especially when probably imminent, by affectionate admonition, prayers, and lawful inducements. Theologians generally allow that mothers whilst child-bearing

See note p. 75. Also, refer for further Special Examination of Conscience, to questions at pp. 90 to 93.

are guilty of mortal sin, when the life of an unborn child is imperiled by carrying great burdens, by excessive dancing, exercise, over travelling and fatigue, by passion or vehement grief. After birth, if excused from the duty of suckling and nursing her own child, a mother should procure a nurse who will take care of its health and morals.

Have I contracted debts without my husband's knowledge, or beyond his means of paying?

Have I indulged in extravagance of

dress or household expenses?

Have I applied money, without my husband's knowledge or against his will, for a purpose different to the one intended by him?

Have I been surly, sullen, stubborn, disobedient and disrespectful, when spoken

to in a reasonable manner?

Have I made his home and my society disagreeable to him, by ill manners, ill temper, bad management, fault-finding, capriciousness, pleasure-seeking, or by improper connections or actions?

Have I imprudently revealed his faults

or private affairs to others?*

^{*} See note p. 75. Also, refer for further Special Examination of Conscience, to questions at pp. 90 to 93

Duties of Governors, Legislators, Judges, Landlords, Agents, Magistrates, or Officials.

"If then your delight be in thrones, and sceptres, O ye kings of the people, love wisdom, that you may reign for ever. Love the light of wisdom, all ye that bear rule over peoples." (Wisdom vi. 22, 23.)

"Thou shalt not receive the voice of a lie. ** Neither shalt thou yield in judgment to the opinion of the most part, to stray from the truth. ** Thou shalt not go aside in the poor man's judgment." (Exod. xxiii. 1, 2, 6.)
"Ye shall not hurt a widow or an

"Ye shall not hurt a widow or an orphan. If you hurt them, they will cry out to me, and I will hear their cry; and my rage shall be enkindled, and I will strike you with the sword." (Exod. xxii. 22, 23, 24.)

Governors, legislators, and public representatives should be gifted with knowledge for the important duties they have assumed, or for which they have been elected. They should prefer public utility to the interests of classes. They should not promote by their acts, speeches, or votes, any measure which would be opposed to Catholic doctrine or morals; as for instance, allowing a civil divorce from the bond of marriage for adultery, or owing to any other cause. Neither should they promote infidelity, heresy, or indifferentism; but they are

not to be blamed, when assisting in carrying out laws whereby the common rights of citizens are already constitutionally guaranteed. As love of a common country should pervade the breast of each good citizen; so nothing that would serve or accommodate particular localities should be promoted with loss to the public. They should not, to secure the votes of their constituents, or for personal interest, yield to unjust preja-dices, cajolery, a ruinous line of policy, jobbing, office begging, or hunting with a compromise of just principle, or vote for measures having no public utility to recommend their adoption. Governors, or persons charged with executive duties, should never promote ignorant, incapable or dishonest men to official positions or power. The right man should always be selected to fill the right post, generally irrespective of party considerations. But they do not act unwisely, by retaining or placing in office men of experience and trust belonging to their own party, especially in cabinet councils, and in the more responsible situations of government.

As emperors, kings, or presidents are charged with higher positions and responsibilities than others, so must they devote more care to consult equitably for the benefit of all their subjects; with sound judgment and with a view to promote public utility must they either sanction or cancel legislative enactments. They would sin grievously, if for just reasons, and when it can be done without detriment to public interests, they do not exercise their prerogative of mercy in favour of condemned persons; if they do not take care to enforce a just and an enlightened execution of the law; if they allow fraudulent or unprincipled men to drain the public treasury; or if they do not take care to provide for public improvements, tranquillity and order, by the

adoption of right and judicious measures.

Those governors or legislators sin grievously, who largely waste public funds in matters of little utility, or who neglect to provide for important state necessities; who through any corrupt or selfish motive reject measures intrinsically good; who vote or legislate badly, with the hope of securing a reward or through some unworthy

secret pact; who waste valuable public time or money, by engaging in useless discussions, thus delaying wholesome legislative measures; who are scheming to promote laws, with a view to their own rather than to the public interest.

Judges or magistrates, in their official capacity, have been appointed by legitimate public authority to administer laws, to decide cases, and when necessary to decree punishment, always with justice, impartiality, prudently, and in a humane spirit Hence, they ought to have a tence is left in a great measure to their discretion, public utility and the reformation of a criminal's morals should guide their course of procedure; they should not violate the rules of legal or commutative justice; they ought to have a clear intellect, and perception of intricate cases, with the hearings of law and fact on them; they are bound to be inflexibly just and uncorruptible; they are obliged to pass sentence according to the laws and to the order of procedure determined by them; they must administer these laws without change or reservation, except when their sense or bearing, rather than their phraseology, must be attended to, especially in cases where age, rank, or fortune are to be considered. In doubtful cases, these following rules should be observed, viz., 1. In criminal prosecutions, the accused should receive favour, unless the crime be manifest. 2. In cases referring to property and possession, judgment should proceed according to the most probable reasons. 3. In a doubt regarding property alone, the condition of a pos-sessor is better than that of other claimants. Judges or magistrates should condemn an accused person, only according to evidence, even although privately satisfied of his guilt; they should not accept presents from par-ties implicated in judicial cases which occupy their attention; they should not induce an accused person fraudulently, or contrary to legal observances, to injure himself; they should expedite cases, as far as possible, still adhering to legal requirements and necessary terms, and they must afford sufficient time for procuring witnesses, documents, or legal advice to an accused person. It is

certain, that if judges or magiatrates fail very notably in the foregoing requirements, in discharge of these duties already indicated, they are guilty of grievous sin, and might often be obliged to make restitution so far as circumstances allow, for their erroneous decisions.*

Landlords ought to treat their tenants, especially those of good character, industrious, or embarrassed through no fault of their own, with justice and charity. They should not exact exorbitant rents for lands or houses; they should not confiscate, without full recompense made, improvements effected by tenants; they should be forbearing, and even liberal, when blight, famine, plague, loss of crops, family deaths, storms, inundations, fires, &c. ensue, especially in a peculiarly distressing manner; they should faithfully fulfil just contracts, encourage industry, comfort in mode of living, religious practices, education, and morality; should not spend their time or money in promoting idle, or vicious, or demoralizing pursuits, but rather in founding or supporting religious or useful establishments and societies, thus giving employment to tenants or labourers on their property, whilst promoting their moral and social welfare: they should occasionally visit or see tenants, their children, their houses, farms. &c. thus to encourage, advise, and promote their well being, by affable, kindly, and charitable intercourse, which serves so



^{*} St. Thomas says, that a judge could condemn an innocent person to punishment, when found guilty, according to legal procedure; whilst St. Bonaventure holds a contrary opinion. St. Alphonsus Liguori admits either theological opinion as probable, if we regard civil causes or even criminal cases of lesser importance; for thus, private inconvenience, when not of great moment, should yield to the good of society at large. But, this latter theologian regards the opinion of St. Bonaventure as more eligible, if criminal cases of great importance, and especially capital cases, be in question; for in such a matter, it seems intrinsically evil to condemn an innocent person.

much to promote harmony, just ideas, and order amongst diff-rent classes; they should never unworthily use their influence to coerce the consciences or vites of tenants at elections or in local matters, regarding which there may be a fair diversity of opinion; they should not impose unjust harsh, or unnatural restrictions with regard to marriages, leases, &c.; in fine, landlords should always remember, that their own religious and material interests are associated with the prosperity, happiness, good conduct, respect, and love of their tenants and dep-indants. Any grave neglect or departure from these duties already detailed, especially where justice is concerned, would hardly exempt laudlords from the guilt of mortal sin.

Agents, acting for landlords, assume the discharge of their nuties so far as they are relatively allowed to exercise them; and whilst they are obliged to be faithful to their employer's interests, it would be highly improper to engage in oppressive, exacting, or arbitrary proceedings against tenants . If occasionally obliged to execute distasteful, imprudent, or unjust orders, they should take an early or proper opportunity to represent and plead for the exercise of justice or charity. In all other agencies, referring to mercantile transactions or trusts. agents are obliged to consult for their employer's interests as if they were personally concerned in each matter; and to be strictly attentive, faithful, just, honest, and intelligent in transacting business. In justice and charity, when their wishes are not controlled, they are bound as principals.

Officials must have a competent knowledge of the duties they are to discharge, and execute them exactly in the manner and within the time prescribed. They must only exact emoluments or fees prescribed by law, they must not accept bribes or use their official position for the promotion of unworthy persons or objects. Any serious neglect or act in these particulars can hardly be excused from the guilt of mortal sin. But as in their case, they are not accountable for existing legislation, and are appointed for the execution of general legal requirements; they seem to be excusable, when transacting business prescribed, even although somewhat detri-

mental to religion and to ecclesiastical law. Thus, if parties form a civil contract of marriage before them. although Church laws or prescriptions be violated by these, a Catholic official or notary is not to be supposed as performing any sacred rite, but only as officiating or testifying in his civil capacity, regarding the consent given Yet such official ought properly to warn or advise Catholics about to act in this manner, that they should seek the ministry of a priest. If, however, this monition be unheeded, and if there be a Protestant official who would have little scruple in receiving them, or if penalties or fines be imposed for refusing to discharge an office the law imposes, it can hardly be supposed the Catholic official will be blameable by affording his reluctant co-operation to the execution of a merely civilian requirement. .

Have I showed proper patience, good temper, and courtesy in hearing and de-

ciding on cases?

Have I been influenced in the discharge of my duty by fear, favour, human respect, affection, interest of myself or family, resentment, or a desire of popularity?

Have I revealed important official confi-

dence to my family or others?

Have I leaned sufficiently to the side of mercy?

Have I shielded the wicked?

Have I neglected, or oppressed, or pleaded for the poor and unprotected?

Have I taken or given bribes, or acted through corrupt motives?

Have I assumed posts of high responsibility without adequate skill, counsel, prudence, knowledge, judgment or experience?

Have I perverted my trust or position to promote unworthy men or bad objects?

Have I been inflexibly just, impartial,

prudent and humane?

Have I a sufficient knowledge of the laws, or of my own particular public duties and requirements?

Have I given the accused sufficient time or opportunities to arrange for his defence?

Have I by a wrong or interested procedure acted unjustly towards any litigant?

Have I injured public, for the sake of personal or local, interests?

Have I promoted or advocated infi-

delity, heresy or indifferentism?

Have I promoted public improvements, tranquillity, and order?

Have I wasted public time or funds, or

exacted unlawful fees?

Have I faithfully and exactly executed my public or private trusts and duties?

Have I treated tenants or dependants with justice and charity?

Have I been considerate to them, especially when industrious, poor, or in difficulties?

Have I exacted unreasonable rents, or unjustly undervalued or confiscated their improvements?

Have I used my position and influence to promote their religious, moral, or material welfare and comforts?

Have I imposed harsh or inconvenient restrictions on them?

Have I acted imperiously or unscrupulously towards them in coercing their

freedom of will, votes or actions?

Have I actively encouraged or promoted measures for their social convenience and happiness?

Have I set a good example in my pub-

lic and private relations?

Have I wasted time and money on unprofitable or demoralizing pursuits?*

Duties of Masters, Mistresses, and Employers.

"Masters, do to your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that

* See Note, p. 75.

you also have a master in heaven." (Col. iv. 1.)

They are bound to treat their dependants with kindness, by not exacting overwork, by giving them good and sufficient food or wages, by courteously and lumanely speaking and acting towards them, by instructing and directing them in religious or secular duties, by admonishing and prudently correcting them when neces-

sary.

Hence masters, mistresses and employers generally sin grievously, if they do not allow servants or apprentices sufficient time to learn the rudiments of Christian Doctrine, at home or in the catechism-classes; if they will not allow them to assist at Mass, or if they compel them to labour on Sundays or holydays of obligation; if they do not take care they shall hear sermons, lectures, or instructions suitable to their state; if they will not see that they confess and communicate at convenient and appropriate intervals; if they do not restrain them, as far as possible, from the commission of sin; if they place dependants, especially those of a different sex, in dangerous occasions of sin; if they do not caution and correct servants who give great scandal or commit grievous sins; if they do not dismiss those found to be incorrigible or capable of corrupting others, unless at the time their peculiar services cannot be dispensed with conveniently; if they bring into their families irreligious, blaspheming, or obscene-speaking servants: if by bad example or solicitation they induce or entice dependants to any great crime; if they defraud or do not pay a just rate of wages, and especially what had been agreed on; if they dismiss servants before a term has expired, without fair cause; if they defer too long payment of wages; if they do not kindly minister to servants when sick, or inhumanly dismiss them without a suitable provision at this time.

Other lesser offences may excuse masters, mistresses, or employers, from the guilt of mortal sin, as regard

relations with those under their care.

Have I ill-treated or overworked servants or tradesmen?

Have I paid their wages punctually and

according to my agreement?

Have I broken engagements with them? Have I made hard or unjust terms before or after engaging them?

Have I given them a sufficiency of

wholesome and nourishing food?

Have I allowed them prudent and necessary recreation?

Have I asked them to do what is sin-

ful or allowed them to commit sin?

Have I neglected to influence their attendance at religious instructions, the holy sacrifice of the mass, prayers, or frequenting the sacraments?

Have I allowed them imprudent intercourse with bad persons, or resort to bad

places?*

Duties of Merchants, Manufacturers, Innkeepers, and Traders.

"Thou shalt have a just and a true weight, and thy bushel shall be equal and true." (Deut. xxv. 15.)

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

All persons occupied in mercantile transactions are bound to observe the strict rules of justice in their several contracts and engagements. Amongst other obligations. they must not diminish a just weight or measure of goods; they ought not to sell old, defective, adulterated or damaged merchandize, as sound and warranted: they must not unjustly defraud the revenue; they should not be ready to exact exorbitant profits from a buyer; they ought not to sell food or drink or other wares, nor keep houses, detrimental to public health or morality; they must not defer payments to their creditors beyond a certain time stipulated; nor should they publicly buy or sell on Sundays or Festival Days, beyond what custom has rightly prescribed. Again, they must not purchase stolen goods, nor matters prudently supposed to have been stolen. Neither should they enter upon any business contract or sale, having a doubt regarding the fairness of such transaction. It is not allowed to run recklessly into debt, without a fair prospect of payment; to pass bad bills or money, even although received bona fide in the way of business; to enter into fraudulent contracts; to make unjust compositions with creditors; to promote monopolies which are injurious to public or private interests; to deceive ignorant buyers as to the quality of articles or animals; to start unprincipled and wild commercial schemes, calculated to injure stockholders or others; to fail in delivering goods at a determinate time, with loss to the receiver; or to involve others, by advice or co-operation, in ruinous expenses and rash undertakings. We have already treated, under the head of the Seventh and Tenth Commandments, regarding principles, which serve to determine degrees of guilt referring to injustice, the necessity of restitution and the manner in which it should take place.

Have I been accustomed to overcharge, take advantage of customers, or adulterate the quality of drugs, eatables, or other merchandize? Have I sold things deleterious to health?

Have I exposed for sale or dealt in prints, books, or objects injurious to the interests of religion or morality?

Have I, through ignorance, presumption or malice, given mercantile hints or advice calculated to injure others?

Have I undertaken to construct engines, ships, or complicated machines without requisite knowledge?

Have I given drink to habitual drunkards, to the young, of to those nearly or quite drunk?

Have I encouraged persons to injure their family by expense or dissipation, to promote my own profit or advantage?

Have I kept a public house open during Mass on Sundays or holydays of obli-

gation?

Have I allowed it to be a place of bad or doubtful character owing to the persons frequenting it, public or dangerous dances, bad songs, gambling, immoral shows or wicked discourse?

Have I permitted it to become a place

for scandalous assignations, or interviews, secret or evil societies?*

Duties of Tradesmen, Servants, Clerks, or Apprentices.

"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." (1 Pet. ii. 18.)

Dependants owe just reverence, obedience and fidelity

to their masters and employers.

Hence these persons often sin grievously and always against justice, who do not take sufficient care of property or trusts committed to their charge, who take food, drink or other matters, not allowed them, either for their own or for the use of other persons. Restitution must be made for the value of what has been given away, sold or consumed. They usually sin grievously by making known their employer's secrets or personal serious faults, by bringing them into contempt or hatred, or by causing them to fall into passions, or errors, to their great loss of character or position. According to the nature of the case, dependants sin, more or less, who answer insolently or murmur when they receive directions, who do not properly execute the labours or trusts enjoined on them, who waste their time uselessly or injudiciously, who labour or do business for themselves to the loss of their employers, and who do not manifest a ready obedience in all things, that affect the substance of their contract, or that regard the observance of good morals.

^{*} See Note, p. 75. Also, refer to the Examination of Conscience, at pp. 93 to 99, for special questions bearing on mercantile transactions.

Have I broken lawful or just engagements or agreements?

Have I served my employers diligently

and faithfully?

Have I wasted their substance?

Have I disobeyed their orders or wishes?

Have I given away or damaged any portion of their property?

Have I caused them loss by my neglect

or oversight?

Have I taken or kept their substance on pretence of my wages or emolument being too low?

Have I kept back change when making

purchases?

Have I revealed the faults of my employers to their prejudice, and without necessity?

Have I concealed from my employers the thefts or misconduct of incorrigible fellow-servants in matters appertaining to my charge?

Have I been the cause of other servants' dismissal, owing to my false or malicious

charges or insinuations?

Have I engaged in a service, where faith or morals had been exposed, or where

I would not be permitted to hear mass or approach the sacraments?

Have I assisted my employers in any

immoral or criminal design?

Have I been induced by my employers or fellow servants, to join in uncatholic forms of prayer, to read sectarian books or tracts, or to be enticed to Protestant churches, meetings, or sermons?

Have I sown discord amongst my fellow servants, or amongst members of the

family in which I reside?*

Duties of Advocates and Lawyers.

"Wisdom and discipline, and the knowledge of the law are with God." (*Eccle*siasticus xi. 15.)

Advocates and Lawyers are obliged to have at least a competent knowledge of law, and the manner of conducting cases; they must bestow sufficient care and study on a case in which they are engaged; they should never unnecessarily prolong civil pleadings or causes, especially when attended with great expense to their clients; they ought never advise to or engage in a cause manifestly unjust;

^{*} See Note, p. 75,

⁺ If in successfully defending such a cause, those who profit by the unjust sentence fail to repair the amount of injury committed against the innocent party, their legal advisers or pleaders are obliged fully to satisfy for the losses sustained.

they must not proceed as prosecutors in criminal cases which are evidently unjust, or if the innocence of the accused person be established or detected, in the beginning, course, or end of a prosecution, this bad cause and the consequences likely to ensue must be at once quashed, removed, or prevented, by the efforts of such lawyers: if advice or opinions be sought, in proportion to its importance, after seriously and diligently enquiring into the matter, they ought faithfully expose to a client, the merits, justice, or injustice, probability of obtaining a favourable or unfavourable decree. &c. in the case: they must always avoid fraud, false testimony, or other unjust means, that might be employed against an adversary; they must not charge exorbitant fees, and espe-cially in the case of poor or distressed persons. Any very great departure from the duties here laid down would involve the guilt of mortal sin, and any loss sustained owing to the culpable ignorance, neglect, or fraud of advocates or lawvers must be fully repaired by them.

Have I been ignorant of my professional duties?

Have I promoted or maintained unjust lawsuits?

Have I caused useless or expensive litigation?

Have I charged exorbitant fees?

Have I maintained any cause by unjust devices?

Have I given wrong advice to a client to promote my own personal gain, or to involve him in pecuniary risk?

In criminal cases, even when guilt becomes established, the accused can always be defended, but by honcat and lawful means only, secluding falsehood, fraud, &c.

Have I neglected to study in proportion to the importance of a case submitted for my opinion?

Have I been obsequious or overbearing to judges or jurymen to the prejudice of

my client's cause?

Have I injured a just cause by ignorance, carelessness, or unnecessary delay?

Have I falsified or obliterated records, documents, &c. for the purpose of promoting a cause?

Have I borne unjustly on accused persons, especially in grave criminal cases?

Have I revealed strictly professional confidence to members of my family or others?

Have I neglected or refused to make full restitution for any injury I have unfairly caused to others owing to unjust professional practice?*

Duties of Physicians and Surgeons.

"Not distrusting my life, but having great hope to escape the sickness." (2 Mac. ix. 22.)

Physicians, Surgeons and Medical Practitioners are

* See note p. 75.

obliged, under penalty of mortal sin, to have sufficient knowledge and skill for the exercise of their profession. and to give sufficient time and attention to a case of moment, entrusted to their treatment. If in these particulars they are found deficient, not only is sin committed, but reparation must be made for all losses consequent on their ignorance, dishonesty, or neglect. In these cases, following, Physicians or Surgeons sin grievously: viz. if they undertake the cure of a serious illness without sufficient medical education and capacity: if they do not give special attention to a new and an unusual type of malignant disease; if they apply for the mere sake of experiment any medicine, the qualities of which are unknown or have not been judiciously tested; if they rashly use dangerous or unknown remedies in reference to the nature of a distemper. especially with peril to the life or safety of a patient: if assuming the duty and knowing the critical state of a case, they do not attend without delay, visiting a patient at frequent intervals, when necessary, both by day and night, besides adopting or directing all the precautions and means required to counteract this illness; if they will not allow other physicians or surgeons to be called in for consultation, when requisite, or when advising other practitioners to be called through motives of favouritism rather than in reference to their skill; if without necessity, other physicians are sent for, thus entailing useless expense on the sick person or his friends; if they demand exorbitant fees, or if for sake of gain they multiply visits without necessity, charging for each visit; if persuaded by other physicians, they act contrary to the dictates of a safe conscience in various critical cases imperiling life or health; if favourite apothecaries are employed, without reference to their proficiency or the quality of their drugs, or if unnecessary medicine be ordered and paid for; if they advise or afford assistance in cases of abortion or in the means necessary to procure it; if they do not admonish a Catholic patient or his friends regarding the serious nature of his illness, so that the Sacraments and last rites of his Church may be administered in sufficient time. In like manner,

apothecaries, with very few exceptions, to the particulars already laid down, are obliged to practise their pro-fessions under pain of mortal sin. They should devote particular care in the use or sale of poisons, or in giving to pregnant females medicines calculated to cause abor-They would of course sin, also, in different degrees, according to the nature of each case, in vending old or partially useless drugs, in making one unsuitable medicine serve for some other to which it may or may not have some affinity, in not faithfully compounding the safe prescriptions of a duly qualified physician, in not sending the medicine at a proper time to the patient. as also in a variety of other particulars. In treating the sick, Medical Practitioners are bound to observe the following rules: viz. 1. They should follow the reasonable and safe opinions of qualified Physicians, at least, in ordinary practice. 2. When it is certain that a particular medicine, remedy, or mode of treatment would prove advantageous to a patient, it ought to be applied without hesitation; or if certainty be wanting, that which will most probably effect the best result should be preferred. 3. When no reasonable hope of restoring health exists, and when a doubtful remedy, or one regarding which a doubt may be entertained as to its efficacy or injurious tendency, theologians generally allow freedom of action to a duly qualified medical man.

Have I exclusively undertaken any case without sufficient professional knowledge, practice and experience?

Have I under any circumstances directly, negligently, or intentionally caused the death of an infant before or after birth?

Have I sanctioned such a crime or neg-

lected to use all my powers of persuasion or influence to prevent its commission?

Have I neglected to baptize an infant

in immediate danger of death?*

Have I used dangerous remedies, or hazarded merciless or reckless operations, advice, or experiments, especially in the case of poor and neglected persons?

Have I operated when too nervous, not sober, or through over-presumption, particularly in difficult and dangerous cases?

Have I neglected or refused a necessary

consultation?

Have I caused needless expense, especially to poor and struggling families?

Have I prescribed medicines slightly

Have I prescribed medicines slightly injurious to please patients or their families?

Have I stupified the dying or shortened

^{*} Baptism is performed by pouring any kind of natural and not artificial or distilled water on the head of an infant, if possible, otherwise on any other part of the body exposed, whilst at the same time repeating these words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." When there is a doubt of the child being alive, and to prevent unnecessary profanation of a sacrament, Baptism should be administered conditionally, and with the following form of words: "If thou art living, I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

life by allowing drink or soporiferous medicines?

Have I used any improper influence over the weak mind of a patient for selfish or improper purposes, or in collusion with other interested individuals?

Have I abused or committed any impropriety with a patient of another sex?

Have I revealed professional secrets or damaged the character of a patient by unworthy revelations?

Have I concealed from patients a knowledge of their approaching unconscious-

ness or death?

Have I neglected to warn a patient and members of his family to send for the priest in sufficient time, when danger is apprehended?*

Duties of Teachers.

"To know wisdom and instruction: to understand the words of prudence: and to receive the instruction of doctrine, justice, and judgment, and equity. To give subtilty to little ones, to the young

^{*} See note, p. 75.

man knowledge and understanding." (Prov. i. 2, 3, 4.)

As teachers are entrusted by parents and guardians of vouth, with a certain delegated authority over children committed to their charge, it is certain that they are obliged to instruct Catholic pupils, so that they may imbibe just principles and knowledge regarding Catholic faith and morals. They are bound, also, to render themselves proficients in the arts, sciences, and accomplishments they undertake to teach; they should be careful to advance and improve their pupils in literary acquirements, so far as lies in their power; to guard them against the contagion of bad example or vicious pursuits; to prevent, so far as they can, depraved teachers, servants, or scholars associating with them. They should entertain affection for their pupils, and set good example to them during their course of instruction, whilst administering correction to them when necessary, with prudence, moderation, and in good temper. Hence, teachers sin grievously by wasting the time or neglecting the instruction of pupils in a great degree; when they unjustly punish children, particularly with severity; if they neglect to teach them good morals ; if purposely they teach as true that which is false, or pernicious to their eternal interests; if they corrupt the minds or morals of children, and especially if they allow them to be seduced into the commission of grievous sins; if they admit to school any pupils or assistants, who would be likely to afford bad example, teach evil habits, or injure other children's faith or morality.

Have I neglected to give sufficient time, attention, and zeal to the discharge of my teaching duties?

Have I been deficient in method, firmness, and punctuality in teaching or en-

forcing discipline?

Have I shown partiality or severity towards some children more than others?

Have I been wanting in kindness or courtesy towards poor children or their parents?

Have I excited or flattered vanity, or any other bad disposition amongst chil-

dren?

Have I given disedification in or out of school?

Have I neglected to give religious, moral, and secular instruction, so as to

improve my pupils?

Have I given vague or hasty directions or instruction, so as to confuse the minds of children?

Have I corrected violently or impru-

dently?

Have I encouraged tale-bearing?

Have I neglected to make the children intelligent, polite, truthful, and conscientious?

Have my reproofs [been satirical, uncharitable, uncourteous, overbearing, irritating, or passionate?

Have I been wanting in affectionate reverence, and just obedience to priests?

Have I criticised, murmured at, or dis-

respected the just orders of inspectors or superiors?*

Duties of Scholars and Pupils.

"Wherefore I wished, and understanding was given me: and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me. And I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison with her." (Wisdom vii. 7, 8.

These are obliged to observe reverence, obedience, and love towards their teachers, on account of the care, superintendence, and instruction bestowed on them. Wherefore, pupils may easily fall into mortal sin, if they do not study diligently, or if they waste a considerable time in play, idleness, or other foolish pursuits, contrary to the will of their teachers. If these latter be maliciously made subjects for derision, calumny, scorn, malediction, or injury, by scholars, it will be a matter of difficulty to excuse pupils from grievous sin, unless extreme youth unguarded impulse, or want of advertence, plead some extenuation.

Have I been wanting in reverence, love, or obedience to my teachers?

Have I taught other companions to be wanting in those duties towards them?

Have I wasted, or caused others to

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

waste, the time that should be devoted to

studies, in idleness or play?

Have I got up cabals or reports which tended to interfere with obedience to teachers or observance of school discipline?

Have I regarded other duties to be observed towards superiors, as pointed out under the head of the Fourth Command-

ment?*

Duties of Doorkeepers, Collectors, Officers, and Members belonging to Religious Confraternities.

"Obey your prelates, and be subject to them; for they watch as being to render an account of your souls." (Heb. xiii. 17.)

F Persons, who undertake such obligations, are bound to give great edification to members of a congregation, to be very punctual and faithful in discharging their duties, to be strictly honest and conscientious. A grave fault against justice or charity would involve the guilt of mortal sin.

Have I neglected the rules or spirit of any Confraternity or Religious Society? Have I been guilty of any dishonesty,

• See note p. 75. Also refer for further special examination of conscience, to questions at pp. 83 to 86.

want of integrity, or used my position for the promotion of bad persons or objects?

Have I been absent when the proper

time for my presence had arrived?

Have I been sober, zealous, prudent

and religious?

Have I manifested discourtesy, roughness or bad temper towards any member of a congregation or religious society?

Have I been wanting in edifying, considerate and cheerful obedience to supe-

riors and to their directions?

Have I imprudently criticized, exaggerated or misrepresented their directions and wishes ?

Have I joined in or been the cause of disorganization, dissension, distractions, disedification, or irreligion?*

Duties of Catechists, Choristers, Organists, Sacristans and Altar Boys.

"The law of the Lord is unspotted, converting souls: the testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to little ones. * * * The fear of the Lord is holy. enduring for ever and ever; the judgments

* See Note, p. 75,

of the Lord are true, justified in themselves. * * * In keeping them there is a great reward."—(Ps. xviii. 8, 10, 12.)

Persons, who are required to discharge these duties, being prominently brought before a congregation, should observe correctness and modesty of deportment, great reverence for the ceremonies and services of the Church, with a desire to contribute in every way towards the decency and solemnities of religious worship. Mortal sin could easily arise from great scandal given by them, especially when want of sufficient age or advertence may not extenuate their offence.

Have I been actuated by vanity or a desire of display in executing the religious functions I have undertaken, to the detriment of God's honour and to the disedification of my neighbour?

Have I been wanting in internal and external devotion, or reverence in the dis-

charge of my religious functions?

Have I spoken loudly or unnecessarily, in choir, sacristy, or church, during preparation for or at Mass, Vespers, or other religious service?

Have I neglected the instruction or preparation necessary for duly discharging

my functions?

Have I negligently or irreverently performed the sacred ceremonies at High Mass and at other religious celebrations or exercises?

Have I by my conduct caused distraction to any one during prayers or sermons?

Have I been wanting in obedience, docility and edification when receiving or carrying out the bishop's or priest's directions?

Have I resigned my duties hastily or in a passion so as to prevent the solemnities of religion being performed?

Have I engaged in disedifying occupations or amusements inconsistent with my religious profession or engagements? Have I neglected or been unpunctual

Have I neglected or been unpunctual to the rules of association or in attendance necessary to be observed by all wellorganized religious societies?

Have I been known to absent myself too long from the Holy Sacraments and

exercises of piety?*

Duties of the Clergy.

"It behoveth therefore a bishop to be blameless, the husband of one wife, sober,

* See Note, p. 75.

prudent, of good behaviour, chaste, given

to hospitality, a teacher." (1 Tim. iii. 2.)
"Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine. * * Be thou vigilant, labour in all things, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. Be sober."—(2 Tim. iv. 2, 5.)

"Deacons in like manner, chaste, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre." (1 Tim. iii.

8.)

In addition to observing the Commandments of God and Precepts of the Church, whilst avoiding the commission of all mortal sin, which would profane but not invalidate his administration of the Sacraments, a cleric is bound fully to discharge all his duties, to edify and instruct the laity by example, word and act, whilst he should ever aspire to perfection, and seek the salvation

of others.

All those who are ordained subdeacons, or who assume a higher grade of holy orders, are bound to observe celibacy, and a life of great purity and perfection; they are obliged to recite the Divine Office daily, correctly, with attention and devotion, according to the rubrics prescribing the manner, time, place, and situation required, when lawful necessity does not exempt from these special observances; they should ordinarily wear the clerical dress usual in the country to which they belong; and whilst engaged in the celebration of Mass or other public ceremonies, they should always assume their proper vestments and in a manner prescribed by the ritual. In general, clerics are probibited to engage in any pursuit unworthy of or incompatible with the exercise of their sacred ministry; nor can they even publicly profess or exercise the medical or surgical profession, except in case of necessity; neither can they become judges in cases where loss of life may be concerned; nor can they become advocates, notaries, or patrons in secular causes,; nor can they wage war or go out armed, except in a case of necessity; neither should they frequent taverns. low houses of entertainment, or other disreputable places. They are obliged by the canons to abstain from dice, or other kinds of play, when chance more than skill directs the result; they should not play for large stakes or for the sake of gain; they must abstain from hunting, when of a public and very exciting or dangerous description; they should not engage in merchandize or traffic, as a general rule.

The special obligations of bishops are, to fulfil all duties appertaining to the good direction and salvation of souls: to set a good and perfect example to the clergy and laity over whom they rule; to offer up the Holy Sacrifice, administer the necessary sacraments, and preach God's word to their flock; to reside near their cathedral churches or in their dioceses, unless when just reasons require their absence; to have a paternal care of the poor and distressed; to discharge all the obligations of good pastors, in giving religious and prudent advice and admonition to clergy and laity, in ordaining or promoting only those distinguished by their virtues. abilities and merits, in taking care that all their subjects fulfil duties and trusts committed to them, with prudent and pious exactness, in restraining the vices of wicked persons, in correcting abuses, in holding diocesan synods, visitations, confirmations, church dedications or consecrations. &c. when requisite.

Pastors are required to reside constantly within their parishes and near their parish churches, if possible : and those who act for pastors or as missionaries, ought conform to the same rule. Parish priests, or those having cure of souls, are obliged to apply the holy sacrifice of the Mass for and preach to their parishioners every Sunday or holy day of obligation; or if lawfully prevented, they should take care to have such obligations discharged by suitable persons. On these days at least. they must take care to have the young or ignorant amongst their flock instructed in the rudiments of Christian Faith, and in their special duties. Diligence and zeal in duly administering the Sacraments, and in visiting the sick, are required as chief duties from those having care of souls. Parochial scandals or vices must be denounced and prudently put down; but it would be injudicious and improper, for the most part, to denounce any individual by name or in pointed allusions. A pastor should assist the deserving poor, sick and unfortunate amongst his parishioners, to the just extent of his own means and the occasion, or by engaging the aid of pious and wealthy persons in their behalf. Pastors should also endeavour to erect suitable churches, religious establishments, and schools, when required, or to keep those already existing in good repair, whilst pro-viding everything requisite for the deceacy and solemnity of religious worship. They should teach their people habits of order, industry, morality, and religion, by word and example.

Chaplains or other priests charged with certain special duties or benefices are strictly obliged to fulfil all just and necessary obligations imposed on them or annexed

to that position which they hold.

Have I, from the time I have been admitted to holy orders, taken care to remain chaste and pure in the sight of God and man?

Have I taken care actively, piously, and zealously, to discharge the functions of my

sacred ministry?

Have I devoted a sufficient time each day to the duty of prayer, meditation, the study of Dogmatic or Moral Theology, the

Ritual, the Sacred Scriptures, the Canon Law?

Have I taken care to be versed in a knowledge of what would be required to refute errors or heresies, which have a hold of the public mind, or which are often discussed in society?

Do I prepare my sermons or instructions with sufficient care and study, so as to preach God's word with dignity and effect?

Do I avoid ignorant, imprudent, or intemperate remarks in sermons and conversation?

Have I failed in the obedience and reverence due to my bishop, especially in those matters which appertain to good morals and ecclesiastical discipline?

Have I conformed exactly to diocesan

statutes and regulations?

Have I treated episcopal admonitions with neglect or disrespect?

Do I reluctantly assume onerous or distasteful ministerial duties, when imposed on me?

Have I, as the Council of Trent requires, conformed my life and morals to the holy state to which I am called?

Have I in habit, gesture, motion, discourse, or in any other way exhibited manners disedifying, undignified, light, or not conformable to my sacred profession?

Have I endeavoured to avoid deliberate venial sins, which would be more culpable in the life of a cleric than in that of a lay person, and which would tend to lessen the respect of others for my sacred ministrations?

Do I scrupulously adhere to all Ritual prescriptions and ceremonies in the administration of sacraments, and especially in celebrating the divine mysteries?

Do I neglect, when possible, the practice of approaching confession weekly, at least, or more frequently, if occasion require?

Have I, from the time of my assuming tonsureship, conformed to the custom and habit of dress peculiar to my ecclesiastical state, and to the province in which I reside?

Have I correctly, devoutly, and attentively, recited the Divine Office daily, after being bound thereto, when not lawfully excused, or when no unforeseen or grave impediment need prevent me?

Have I endeavoured fully to comply with its rubrical prescriptions, as to man-ner, time, place, litanies sometimes added, and particulars required, when I can conveniently and faithfully observe them?

Have I wilfully neglected any considerable part of my office, such as one of the small hours, which, in the opinion of all theologians, would constitute a mortal sin?

Have I habitually recited Matins and Lauds, as prescribed, before the celebration of mass ?

Have I unnecessarily interrupted portions of the sacred office which should be

completed without division?

Have I been assiduous, when required, in affording facilities to my people for approaching the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion?

Have I been humble, patient, considerate, and prudent in the tribunal of pen-

ance?

Have I taken exact care to understand the extent of my jurisdiction or faculties?

Have I been careful to superintend or instruct children in the schools or catechism-classes ?

Have I been careful to visit and properly administer sacraments to the sick or

dving?

Have I taken care to understand well the nature of justice and contracts, so that no false decision be made in the sacred tribunal 2

Have I promoted practices of piety?

Have I taken prudent counsel before engaging in any important undertaking?

Have I always felt an interest in judiciously promoting the spiritual and mate-

rial welfare of my people?

Have I practised or engaged in any profession, trade, or occupation, incompatible with the clerical state?

Have I imprudently engaged in public trusts, politics, and business, which tend to excite the mind unduly, and to withdraw it from religious practices?

Have I incurred irregularity, through

defect or crime 2

Have I associated with or engaged in the society of irreligious men or immoral persons?

Have I, through human respect, tolerated great faults or abuses, or have I endeavoured by prudent and effective measures to remove them?

Have I, without ministerial necessity or duty, been in public or disreputable houses or places?

Have I encouraged or indulged in gam-

bling or unbecoming amusement?

Have I been kind and charitable to the deserving poor?

Have I exercised the duties of my min-

istry through pure motives?

Have I attended well to the special duties of my charge or benefice?*

Duties of Religious.

"If thou hast vowed anything to God, defer not to pay it." (Ecclesiastes v. 3.)

"As children of obedience, not fashioned according to the former desires of your ignorance: but according to him that hath called you, who is Holy, be you also in all manner of conversation holy." (1 Pet. i. 14, 15.)

Many laws of the Church relate to religious profession, and determine the conditions on which it may be as-

See note p. 75.

sumed. The Religious State being regarded as a stable or perpetual rule of life, approved by the Church, and tending to advance those professing it in Christian perfection, by the observance of the three vows of poverty,* chastity, and obedience, an exact discharge of the obligations therefrom accruing, is required from such reli-They are bound, as regards the vow of poverty, to give up all personal right of property, or not to exercise dominion over it in their own name; according to a decree of the Council of Trent, neither immoveable nor moveable goods, no matter how acquired by them. can be appropriated as their own property by religious, whether men or women; nor can they possess or hold these effects in the name of their convent, but immediately after such acquisition, they are bound to give these up to their superior, so that they may be incorporated with conventual property. + Nor is it lawful for professed religious to receive, bestow, exchange,

† Sess. xxv. cap. ii. De Reg. et Mon.

^{*} Communities of religious persons may possess immoveable or moveable property and exercise control over it. notwithstanding their vows of poverty; but this privilege requires that each member, on making his or her vow, should relinquish all individual right to and power over temporal goods. The supreme administration of such property is reserved for the Apostolic See, that the welfare of religion may be best regarded; but solely for grave reasons is this faculty exercised, sincejustice demands that each donation be expended only in accordance with the donor's wishes, which in most cases are reasonably presumed. The Brothers Minor alone, by their peculiar institutes, are prevented from retaining in their order a dominion of goods, which they transfer to the Holy See, preserving to themselves, however, their use, although revocable. To all other communities, the Council of Trent left a power of possessing immoveable property. Sess. xxv. cap. iii. De Regularibus et Monialibus.

or convert to their own use anything, without permission of their superior. This, however, may often be reasonably presumed, in discharge of the frequent and inconaiderable trusts committed to them. Those who conceal things given to them are presumed to want the requisite leave of their superior. Whatever property devolves on a religious by donation, heirship, or any other title, should go to that order in which he is professed, even though the donor specially designed it for this individual. Wherefore he would sin grievously by transferring his right to another, or in doing anything which would deprive his community of such possession. By a special institute of St. Ignatius, those who take simple vows amongst the Jesuits do not lose all individual proprietary rights, but they renounce the power in disposing of anything without the superior's leave. But coadiutores formati, who have taken solemn vows, cannot exercise dominion over their goods, unless lawfully dismissed by the society. Dispensations have sometimes been granted to others who have made solemn vows, when a great necessity seemed to require them, as happened after the French Revolution. Religious, having benefices, by custom and law are permitted to administer the proceeds for their own support and for pious purposes; but they would sin by expending them for profane uses, or in giving them to relations, except when these latter happen to be poor. Those who are allowed to conduct missions seem to enjoy similar privileges, with their superior's permission; but the conditions on which these favours are granted must be attended to by each individual. Procurators, bursars, or other persons to whom the administration of affairs has been committed, should observe in discharge of their duties, the rules of their peculiar religious institute, and the injunctions of their superiors. Those in exalted position should not give anything or spend the conventual property, only in accordance with the rules of their institute, and for pious purposes.

The vow of chastity obliges a religious to be pure in mind, and still more to abstain from every external act contrary to chastity. As we have already seen, the profession of a solemn vow annuls future marriage attempt-

ed by a religious; and every impure action following after a vow thus violated has the special guilt of sacrilege annexed.* The Church has always been most desirous to enforce the observance of this vow, in the laws decreed for such purpose. By ancient custom and pontifical decrees, women are forbidden to enter the monastic enclosures of men; and those who would do so, without the necessary license, incur excommunication reserved to the Pope. If introduced or admitted by such religious, these would, by the very act, be deprived of their offices, and be rendered incapable of their future exercise, whilst they would also be suspended from discharging their ecclesiastical duties. ! But in some religious houses of men, in various countries, the difficulty of obtaining lay brothers permits the introduction of female servants; whilst, when charged with the care of souls, religious are permitted to receive the visits of females, on certain necessary spiritual occasions. For the more perfect preservation of a vow of chastity the Council of Trent explicitly declares, that no cloistered nun after her profession should go out of her convent, even for a short time, or under any pretext, except for a legitimate reason, approved of by the bishop. There are causes for departing therefrom, however, in the Constitution of St. Pius V.; viz. a great fire, an epidemic, or a plague occurring. If the convent be subject to regulars, the leave of the regular superior, as also that of the bishop, is requisite in such a case; and when sickness is in question, this proper leave must be obtained in writing, by parties concerned in such removal, under penalty

^{*} The opinion of theologians most commonly received is, that a vow of chastity becomes grievously violated by the commission of internal sins.

[†] Such are declarations found in the Constitutions of St. Gregory the Great, St. Pius V., Gregory XIII., and Benedict XIV.

[‡] Sess. xxv. c. v. De Reg. et Mon.

of excommunication reserved to the Pope,* So that not only would a grievous sin be committed by such religious departing without leave, but a great censure would be incurred. The Council of Trent likewise forbids a person of either sex, or of any rank, condition, or age, to enter such religious establishment, without leave of the bishop or superior obtained in writing, under penalty of excommunication to be incurred by the perpetration of this very act. + To bishops ordinarily appertain the right of enforcing and restoring this law of enclosure, in all houses of religious women, subject to their jurisdiction; in some cases this authority is peculiarly vested in the Holy See ! Any person entering a religious enclosure for a bad purpose incurs excommunication reserved to the Pope.§ In cases of necessity, bishops may enter religious houses within their dioceses: they should be accompanied by a few religious persons, these latter being of mature age ; || but without their own dioceses bishops are not privileged to enter such enclosures without necessity and leave of the ordinary. Nor can regular prelates enter the houses of nuns subject to them, except for grave reasons and according to a form prescribed for them. ** Medical men require to

^{*} See Giraldus Expos. Juris Pontif. Pars ii. § clix. Decori Feb. 1, A.D. 1570.

[†] Founding his decree on this canon, Gregory XIII. forbid any person, under a like penalty, to enter such monastery without license so obtained, and in a case of necessity, whilst he prevents nuns from otherwise admitting any one, notwithstanding customs or privileges then existing.—Constit. Ubi Gratics.

Sess. xxv. c. v. De Reg. et Mon. § Decr. S. C. A.D. 1602.

[¶] Giraldus Expos. Juris Pontif. Pars. ii. § clx. Cons. Greg. XIII. Dubiis. Dec. 28. A.D. 1581.

[¶] Ibid.

^{**} Ibid. Cons. Alexandri VII. Felici Nov. 10, A.D. 1664.

have their license for entrance renewed every three months, and during their professional visits they should be accompanied by two sisters of mature age; nor can infants incapable of sin be even introduced into religious houses. Certain exceptions are made in favour of labourers, mechanics, or business persons, for the necessary exercise of whose services license may be presumed in various cases.! A confessor may enter for administration of the sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist, and Extreme Unction, according to rules prescribed by the Sacred Congregation; and this permission is accorded, not only when a nun is in danger of death, when permission to remain in the monastery by night is tolerated, but as often as the rule or custom allows communion to be given. A secular priest, as confessor, should enter without a companion; a regular priest, entering in the same capacity, should be accompanied by a companion of approved morals and mature age. I It is required that there be as many cells in each religious house, as there are nuns in the community, each nun being obliged to sleep apart from her religious sisters, and separated also from female pupils or others, dwelling under the same roof. 8 Regulars are strictly forbidden, under penalty of severe censures, to approach the enclosure of cloistered nuns, whether belonging to their own or another order, although not even entering, for the purpose of holding conversation with them. A failure in this respect involves a delinquent in the guilt of mor-

S. Alphonsus de Ligorio, Theologia Moralis, lib. vii. cap. ii. n. 226.

[†] Ibid.

 $[\]updownarrow$ Bullum Alexandri VII. Giraldus Expos. Juris Pontif. Pars. ii. § clx.

[§] S. Alphonsus de Ligorio, Theologia Moralis, lib. vii. cap. ii. n. 229.]

Ibid. n. 232. Ex. Decret. S. C. Sixti V. A.D. 1590.

tal sin. If the power of mitigating certain rigorous observances of cloistered life be allowed to bishops by the Apostolic See for special reasons, it is always to be presumed that such concessions must be rarely permitted, or only under peculiar and necessary circumstances. Sisters of Charity and other pious women, who have not taken solemn vows, are not bound by the law of enclosure. But in all cases, those who have applied themselves to a religious life, regulated by special constitutions, and for the purpose of observing chastity, ought ever to bear in mind, that this virtue is only preserved by extreme caution, and that in such respect, it would be desirable to emulate successfully the modesty, reserve, and spirit of retirement, imposed on cloistered nuns.

The vow of obedience obliges a Religious to observe. whether directly or indirectly, all that his superior requires of him, according to the rules and constitution of his order. But it is maintained, that he should violate this yow only when receiving a command, and not merely an advice, from his superior; and the difference between both may easily be discovered, from the nature of words spoken, or the circumstances annexed to their utterance. The virtue of obedience in a religious should extend, not only to external performance of a thing enjoined, but ought to regard internal submission of the will, to render it perfect. Hence, if the external act be performed reluctantly and ungraciously, although the letter of this law be fulfilled, its spirit must be wanting Not only has a legitimate superior the right to enforce what may be explicitly mentioned in religious rules and constitutions, such as silence. abstinence, &c.; but even all things implicitly contained therein, such as, regulations properly made to secure their observance by the infliction of penalties, or whatever rightly appertains to the administration, duties, and objects of community affairs. For religious, by their very state of life, are obliged to follow those things wisely ordered or required for the ends proposed by their special

^{*} Ex Decret. S. C. Julii 1, A.D. 1626, and Maii 3, A.D. 1669.

institutes. And they ought not alone obey their higher superior, but even those inferior to him in authority, and appointed legitimately to fill any office in their community; since good order and government so much depend on proper subjection and ready obedience. To their fellow religious they ought always be respectful, obliging, and charitable. By virtue of his vow, no religious is obliged to obey his superior in whatever may be regarded as impossible of fulfiment, evidently unlawful, or grievously hurtful to himself.* In cases of doubt, regarding the legality of an order from his superior, according to the general opinion of theologians, a religious would be bound to obedience.

Whenever a religious formally rebels against or despises his rules; whenever he would refuse subjection to a superior, requiring him by virtue of holy obedience, or in any other solemn form, rarely however employed; whenever he would reply by a formal refusal, implying great contempt of legitimate authority; whenever a great scandal to fellow-religious or seculars, or a great inconvenience to the community or to others would follow: subjects in a religious establishment sin grievously. Yet happily, such offences are of rare occurrence.

He who generally neglects the rules of his institute, with scandal to others and to his own spiritual detriment, may easily fall into mortal sin; for he greatly injures discipline, and exposes himself to manifest danger.

But in other lesser cases, disobedience does not usually

exceed a venial fault.

A religious superior ought to be most perfect in the literal observance and true spirit of his rule, thus teaching his subjects by example, rather than by word. He should be solicitous to guide them with all diligence to a state of high perfection; and enforce religious discipline with prudence, zeal, humility, mildness, patience,

Obedience must be afforded, when danger is imminent and consonant to the objects of an institute; as when a superior orders his subjects to attend on the sick in times of plague, or when Sacraments should be administered.

amiability, and charity. Religious should also be anxious to secure the most perfect and capable superiors, in electing to such an important office, when making a choice; thus postponing considerations of interest or favouritism to the spiritual good of their community.

This state of life obliges each member professing it, under pain of grievous sin, to aim at, and at least in some degree to make progress in the way of perfection; although under such obligation, a religious is not required to be absolutely perfect. Simple as well as solemn vows appertain to this religious condition of life. A true vocation is requisite for entering the religious, as for the ecclesiastical state; and hence special gifts and graces are bestowed by the Almighty both for embracing it and for fulfilling its obligations. Persons would sin grievously by entering this state, without evident marks of a divine vocation.

Have I entered the religious state without due preparation, and manifest signs of a Divine vocation?

Did any known impediment intervene

to prevent my justly aspiring to it?

Have I endeavoured always to aim at

religious perfection?

Did I when conscious of any invalidity or illegality not seek when possible such dispensation as would remove an impediment?

Have I entertained desires or temptations about returning to the world, and

engaging in a less perfect state?

Have I always followed the rules, spirit and objects of my peculiar religious institute?

In what particulars have I failed? Have I in desire, as well as formally, renounced all possession of goods not permitted by the vow of poverty to be retained by me, in that religious order to which I belong?

Have I without the express or presumed leave of my superior retained superfluities which become the property of the convent?

Have I sought to decline receiving, or have I alienated the bestowal of possessions, which through me would come under the jurisdiction of my order?

Have I in any manner, as having trust in a convent or otherwise, wasted goods

of any value to the community?

Have I in any superior capacity, and according to the objects of my institute, prudently administered the property or money entrusted to me for management?

Have I faithfully observed the vow of chastity, not alone by refraining from all external words or acts contrary thereto, but also by preserving perfect purity of mind and disposition?

Have I taken occasion to transgress

any rules or decrees which would expose

me to worldly intercourse with men or women, contrary to the spirit and object of my order?

Have I given license to or tolerated customs in a convent, by encouraging useless visits, laxity of discipline, or familiarities which are disapproved?

Have I gone out from my convent

without leave or necessity?

Have I, as a regular, entered without proper license, or against rule, the houses of religious men or women?

Have I, when permitted to go abroad, avoided idle conversation and visits, when presumed to be engaged on missions of mercy and charity?

Have I fulfilled cheerfully the vow of obedience towards my superior, or towards others set over me, according to the requirement of my order?

Have I transgressed it through negligence or through a contemptuous or dis-

obedient spirit?

Have I given great scandal or disedification to my fellow-religious, or to externs, by my words or actions?

Have I especially neglected to fulfil the

particular duties or charges assigned to

me by a superior?

Have I neglected or refused to undertake a special religious work, on the ground that it would be too onerous or

dangerous?

Have I, as a superior, been careful piously and prudently to enforce and promote religious exercises, manners, and discipline, to admonish and correct subjects with benignity and charity, to avoid human motives or partiality in apportioning to each suitable respective duties, or to set a perfect example to those under my charge?

Have I neglected schools, religious institutions, orphanages, hospitals, &c. of which I had been patron, director or

superior?*

Having examined our consciences diligently, regarding the general and particular sins or failings which are most likely to affect us individually; we should also take into account whether we have influenced others, or co-operated with them in any of the several transgressions already detailed.

^{*} See Note, p. 75.

The nine ways, by which we may be accessary to the sins of another, are as follows.

1. By counsel.—2. By command.—3. By persuasion.—4. By consent.—5. By participation.—6. By approving.—7. By flattery.—8. By silence.—9. And by defence of the evil committed.

**There may be peculiar states of life or circumstances which involve the commission of sins, not specified in the foregoing Table. Ordinary exercise of the judgment, with sufficient attention and reflection, will assist a penitent to recollect all that may be required for the purpose of a correct and complete self-examination.

A PRAYER AFTER THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

MY Lord God, having now, through Thy gracious goodness, examined the state of my conscience, and discovered a number of sins by which I have offended Thy Divine Majesty, grant me Thy grace to overcome my unruly passions, and to be truly sorry for my manifold transgressions. Grant, I beseech Thee, that I may obtain pardon, through the merits of

Thy only beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the redemption of mankind.

PRAYER REFORE CONFESSION.

By the holy Council of Trent, we are taught that those who desire to obtain the grace of justification, should be thus disposed: viz, they must have faith—they must fear the justice of God—they must hope for mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord—they must begin to love God—they must really detest sin—they must sincerely resolve to change their lives, and keep the Commandments. Such are the leading sentiments contained in the following prayers.

AM fully sensible, O my God, that there can be no greater misfortune than to have displeased Thee, who art infinitely good, and worthy of all our affection. I know how terrible it is to fall unprepared into Thy hands; for who can bear that dreadful sentence; "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into eternal fire." (Matt.

xxv. 41.) But the thought of losing Thee alarms me more than any punishment. Thy patience in waiting for me, Thy readiness to pardon me, the multitude of Thy mercies which I have so often experienced, are now present to my mind. They up-braid me most forcibly. Thou hast brought me forth from nothing; Thou hast created me to Thy own likeness; Thou hast ransomed me with Thy blood, when a slave to Satan. After this, when I rebelled, Thou didst still bear with me. Having adopted me as Thy child, and preferred me to thousands who were never enlightened by Thy law; I have nevertheless deserted Thee, I have tired myself in the ways of iniquity, I have hated Thy discipline, I have disobeyed all Thy Commandments. Though Thou hast often called me back to Thee, I refused to return. Though Thou hast stretched out Thy hands to me, I have paid Thee little regard. Wretch that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes, that day and night I may weep for my ingratitude? I have miserably sinned: what shall I now

do to receive pardon, O Guardian of men? Behold, I acknowledge my iniquity. My transgressions are as a heavy burden upon me. I am not worthy to appear before Thee, nor to lift up my eyes before Thy throne; but, O Lord, from the depth of my misery, I cry out to Thee. Lord, hear my voice, and be merciful to me a sinner! Thy mercies are above all Thy works; Thou willest not my death, but my conversion. Nor didst Thou come on earth to call the just, but sinners. Exercise towards me now Thy goodness and mercy, on which I solely rely. Receive Thy prodigal child into Thy favour; nor let me henceforth be ever separated from Thee.

I have sinned, O Lord, I have done evil in Thy sight. But I shall never say, as Cain did, that my crimes are too great to be forgiven. For I know, that in mercy Thou hast especially displayed Thy power; and that even if my sins were more greatly multiplied, Thy mercies are still infinite. Without this consideration, I should certainly despair; but Thy own repeated assurances, and frequent proofs Thou hast given of Thy patience, support my confidence in Thee, and my hopes of salvation. Thou art Truth itself; Thy promises cannot deceive us. Thou hast declared that the iniquities of a sinner shall not be longer remembered, if he become truly converted, and cease to do evil. Thou hast told us, that a contrite and humble heart shall always find favour with Thee. Thy sacred oracles are full of such consolation. Thy conduct towards sinners speaks the same language. Thou didst pardon David, though his sins were most grievous. Magdalen, a sinner by profession; Peter, who denied Thee with oaths; the Adulteress, convicted in Thy presence; and the crucified Thief, who suffered beside Thee on the cross, did all obtain forgiveness when they sincerely sought it. Thy tenderness was even shown to the traitor Judas, nor were the cruel Jews excluded from a merciful consideration in Thy prayers. I also, my God, will cry to Thee for mercy. Relying on Thy goodness, I shall never be confounded. My sins are enormous; they stand always against me. But the more hideous they are, the more I should detest them. Against Thee, O God, I have

sinned; I am now heartily sorry for it. I wish I had never offended Thee, because Thou art infinitely good; I wish that my sorrow were great as my offences are grievous; oh that I might weep for my sins even unto death, and feel some of those bitter pangs with which Thy soul was filled in the garden of Olives. Let Thy sighs, Thy tears, Thy fainting and Thy bloody sweat, plead now in my behalf; let all Thy grief supply the defects of my imperfect sorrow; let Thy mercies plead for my rebellion and ingratitude, and restore me again to Thy favour and protection. O eternal Source of holiness, from whom all good is derived, be Thou blessed for ever! May every heart be filled with Thy love! No one has more reason to adore Thee than I have; Thy justice hath discovered to me the enormity of my sins; Thy mercy hath preserved me, despite of my ingratitude. Thy bounty hath continued to invite me, notwithstanding my delays; it ceased not Thou art infinitely good; I wish that my notwithstanding my delays; it ceased not to pour Thy grace upon me; it hath changed my will, which inclines me, this moment, to love Thee above all things. My heart, O Lord, is open to Thy divine influences; inflame it, I beseech Thee. with heavenly inspirations, that, purified from my sins, I may ever perseveringly detest them, and be ready to die a thousand deaths, rather than henceforth offend Thee.

Thou hast given power to Thy Church, O Lord, to forgive sins in Thy name. Thou hast promised pardon to those who do penance. Behold Thy prodigal child, nay worse than the prodigal I have disfigured and defiled my soul, that was created to Thy own image and likeness. I have forfeited my title to that eternity of happiness which was prepared for me. I have nourished sin in my bosom, the most poisonous of serpents, and the most hateful of monsters. Alas! I have offended Him, by whose blood I have been redeemed. I have caused His sufferings; I have renewed His death; I have crucified Him again by my sins. Oh! who will give true sorrow to my heart, and a fountain of tears to my eyes. that I may bewail all my iniquities in the bitterness of my soul? Have compassion on me, O most loving Father! I throw myself into the arms of Thy infinite

mercy. Aid me with Thy graces, and admit me to Thy Sacrament of reconciliation. Remove from my heart whatever Thou knowest would profane or defile Thy temple. Root forth from my soul whatever is displeasing to Thee; and lay securely within me the foundation of a new life. I henceforward renounce and utterly detest all my sins, for the pure love of Thee. O my God of infinite bounty and goodness, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee. I beg and hope for pardon; through the merits of Thy only Son, my Saviour Jesus Christ. Accept His passion and death in satisfac-tion for my offences. For His sake, have pity on me, whose only hope is in Thy boundless mercy.

O Maker of heaven and earth! King of kings, and Lord of lords, who of nothing hast created me to Thine own image, and hast redeemed me with Thy most precious blood. Sinner that I am, could I worthily name, or so much as think on Thee? I humbly beseech Thee, that Thou wouldst look on me in Thy pity, and have compassion on me, who showest mercy to the woman of Canaan, and to Mary Magda-

lene, who hast forgiven the publican and the penitent thief. To Thee, most holy God, I confess my sins, which, if I would, I cannot hide from Thy sight. Have mercy on me, O Christ, who, for my sake, hast descended from heaven. Thou art my Creator and Preserver, my Lord and Redeemer, my Governor and most indulgent Father; Thou art my Strength and Refuge, my Hope and Resurrection, my Life and eternal Felicity. Though I have committed that, for which Thou mayest condemn me; yet Thou hast that attribute of mercy, whereby Thou canst forgive me. Let not my wickedness, O Lord, overcome Thy goodness. Spare me, O my dearest Saviour; take compassion on my sinful soul. To whom should I fly, but to Thee? If Thou cast me off, who will receive me? If Thou despise me, and turn Thy face from me, who shall look upon me? Receive me, therefore, O my gracious Lord, returning to Thee, though sinful and unworthy. If I am impure, Thou canst make me clean; if I am sick, Thou canst heal me; if I am cast down, Thou canst revive me. Thy mercy is far greater than my iniquity; and Thou canst forgive more than I can offend. Consider not, O Lord, the number of my sins; but, according to the greatness of Thy mercy, pardon all my transgressions. Say to my soul, "I am thy salvation," who hast said to all the world, "I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live." Convert me to Thee, O Lord, and make me live hereafter with a greater fear of offending Thee, and a due sense of my duty in obeying Thee. Make me direct all my actions to Thy honour, and diligently redeem the time I have misspent, that by a holy life, I may be brought to a happy death, and rejoice with Thee, O my God, for all eternity.

I now see, O Lord, what a bitter and an evil thing it is to have forsaken Thee, to have left the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns, which could never refresh me. I again declare, in Thy presence, that I am sorry for my sins, that I am confounded at my baseness. I here renounce the devil and all his works. I resolve to change my life, to walk faithfully in Thy commandments, to accept and discharge patiently whatever punishment my sins may require, to perform my pen-

ance, and fulfil other satisfactory works, as some sort of atonement for them. I beseech Thee to accept and strengthen these resolutions, in union with the sufferings of Jesus Christ, Thy Beloved Son, that His infinite merits may be applied to my soul, and that my crimes may be effaced and pardoned.

It shall not be said, because Thy mercies are boundless, and Thou hast given me in this Sacrament a sure means of reconciliation, that I shall abuse Thy favours, by sinning with impunity. No, my God, it shall not be so. I take Thyself to witness, that I am firmly resolved to repent, to avoid the dangerous occasions of sin, and to strive particularly against those failings, to which I am most inclined.

O, Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead, from whom nothing is hidden, how can I present myself before Thee, after so many infidelities? But what shall I do? Thou art everywhere; I cannot conceal myself from Thee. I find I have shamelessly committed in Thy presence, what perhaps I would not venture to perpetrate before the most abject of men, and this after frequently promising

to keep Thy commandments. What a subject of confusion to me, were it only to a mortal I had thus broken my word! How unspeakable must Thy goodness be, O God of my heart, having borne with me so long, in the midst of all these transgressions! I am, however, encouraged to hope that Thou wilt not reject me, when I totally renounce them. I have already promised, and I will promise again, at the foot of Thy tribunal, where, through Thy infinite mercy, Thou art pleased to offer me pardon, that henceforth Thy law shall be engraved on my heart, and that all my thoughts, words, and actions, shall be regulated by it. I am pledged and resolved to keep Thy commandments; and with Thy gracious assistance, I am now ready to die rather than mortally transgress them. With these dispositions I desire to approach Thy minister. Accusing myself humbly, sincerely, and penitently, I firmly hope that Thou wilt ratify in heaven that sentence of mercy which he may be inclined to pronounce in my favour.

O Sovereign Creator of all things, when I revolve in mind how greatly I have offended Thee, I must wonder at my folly, seeing that I have forsaken so good a Father. I acknowledge my ingratitude, and lament that from the noble liberty I enjoyed, I have fallen into such a miserable state of slavery. I condemn my imprudence, and can set nothing before my eyes but hell and judgment. The dreadful consequences of my injustice alarm me, for I cannot escape Thy just decrees. But when, on the contrary, I consider Thy great mercy, which, according to the testimony of Thy prophets, exceeds all Thy works, (Psalm cxliv.), then doth a pleasing hope come to refresh me, to bring strength and comfort to my soul. For how can I despair, to obtain pardon of Him, who, by the mouth of His prophets, has so often invited sinners to do penance, saying, "I desire not the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live." (Ezech. xxxiii. 11.) Moreover, what expressions hath not Thy Divine Son used, and what comparisons hath He not employed, to teach us that Thou art always ready to pardon those who are truly penitent? This He signified, by that precious stone,

which was lost and found again, and by the strayed sheep, which the shepherd brought home on his shoulders. (Matt. xviii. 12.) But much more expressly did He image forth His mercy and charity in that parable of the prodigal child. (Luke, xv. 11.) For, in effect, I am that son, who, with so little reason, went away from a Father who so tenderly loved him; I, who have so unfortunately squandered away my estate, I, who instead of submitting to Thy sweet yoke, have unworthily subjected myself to the law of my passions; I, who by this means have fallen into the intolerable bondage of sin, whence there is no way for me to escape but by the aid of Him whom I have un-gratefully forsaken and offended. I cannot hope, like the prodigal son, for Thy paternal kiss, of which I am alto-gether unworthy; I desire not the rich garments with which he was clad, nor the ring that betokened a pledge of restored amity—I ask Thee to receive me not as Thy child. It will be an exceeding hap-piness for me, if Thou wilt please to receive me amongst the number of Thy servants: if Thou wilt brand me with

deserved inferiority, and bind me to Thy service, that I may fly no more from Thee. It shall never grieve me to spend my days in Thy house, as one of the least of Thy dependants, provided I may never more be separated from Thee.

Let Thy mercy, then, O Lord, receive this wretch, who begs Thy pardon, and whom Thou hast tolerated with so much patience, even to this very hour. I am not worthy to lift up my eyes towards Thee, or to call Thee my Father; but Thou hast goodness enough to look down upon me, because Thou art truly a Father. It was this look alone that raised the dead to life; it is this look of Thine that caused those wandering to return to Thee and to their true homes. I am very certain, it would have been impossible for me to entertain the sorrow I now feel, if Thou hadst not beheld me, when I miserably lost myself, by straying far from Thee. From the height of heaven Thou hast looked down upon me, and hast opened my eyes, that I might see myself and know the evils into which I had fallen. Now, Thou hast admonished me by putting me in mind of what a misfortune it is to have lost my baptismal innocence. Hear me, then, O Father of mercies, grant me some share in the favours of Thy only Son, and make me experience the efficacious atonement of His sufferings and death. May the influences of Thy Holy Spirit purify my heart, and inflame it with Thy love, that I may no more wander into this distant and deplorable exile, from which I have been recalled by Thy goodness, who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

Ejaculations which may be frequently repeated before Confession.

O, dearest Lord, bring to my recollection those grievous sins and imperfections whereby I have offended Thee.

Jesus, grant me the spirit of perfect penance, that by contrition, confession, and satisfaction, I may obtain Thy grace, and thoroughly cleanse my conscience.

Jesus, have mercy on me, a wretched sinner, whom Thou hast redeemed with

Thy most precious blood.

Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight no man living shall be justified.

I ---

ACTS BEFORE CONFESSION.

An Act of Contrition.

Think seriously within yourself, whilst repeating this Act of Contrition, on the many obligations you owe to God, so infinitely good and perfect in Himself, whilst you, a wretched worm of the earth, presumed to offend Him daily, without remorse of conscience, or purpose of amendment. Consider how He has preserved your life, not permitting you, like other sinners less guilty perhaps than yourself, to depart this life, and to experience the punishment of the damned in hell. Consider how He has received you into the bosom of Holy Catholic Church, and how He has thereby graciously afforded you the precious gift of Salvation, in preference to so many pagans, infidels, heretics, or sectaries who are excluded from it, although gifted with many good dispositions in which you are lamentably deficient. Consider how He has so often invited you to His Sacraments, the Fountains of Grace, and showered down innumerable blessings on you. Yet, you refuse to attend to His invitations, and reject His inspirations. on His infinite mercy, in coming down from heaven and assuming human nature, in order to elevate our condition, to suffer on the cross for the salvation of mankind. and to procure your eternal happiness. By thus reflecting on these matters, your soul will be stirred up with sorrow for having offended God, and with perfect contrition of heart, rather than with mere verbal expressions and protestations, address Him in the following words:

SECT. I.

MY Lord God, shall I, a wretched sinner on this earth, presume to approach Thee; shall I even dare to lift up my eyes to Thee, after all these sins and transgressions, whereby I have offended Thee? I am covered with confusion and shamefully convicted of ingratitude for offending so great, so good, and so amiable a God. O, my Lord, take compassion on me, and save my sinful soul. I know that in clemency Thou delightest to show Thy gracious consideration for me, and therefore on that mercy I place my chief reliance. Take home Thy strayed sheep, and secure it in Thy sheepfold, along with others, that stray not from Thy protection. Guard me by Thy graces, and never again suffer me to escape from Thee. I have daily offended Thee with impunity, and hitherto I have escaped Thy judgments. I ought to have excited Thy wrath, and still Thou hast delayed to strike. I have often mocked Thee by promises of repen-tance, yet I still continue in my sins, and grow more hardened in my iniquities.

Thou hast still stretched forth Thy arms to offer assistance, Thou hast shown me the fountains of grace and mercy, whilst I have refused to drink of them. Thou hast sought me, and I endeavoured to avoid Thee; Thou hast called me, I did not hearken. Thou hast pursued me, and I have fled from Thee. Thou hast given me time for repentance, yet I have lived without purpose of amendment. In fine, Thou hast prolonged my life, which by a thousand titles I might have justly forfeited to Thee. O, my Lord God, what can I plead in my behalf? What excuse can I advance, in palliation of my glaring crimes? To deceive Thee would be imcrimes? To deceive Thee would be impossible, for Thou knowest all things. To mock Thee, with a feigned promise of repentance, would be unavailing, for Thou art a God that will severely punish the impious. To delay conversion only endangers salvation, for I know not when my slender thread of live may be severed. Immediate repentance for my sins Thou requirest, and true sorrow for having offended Thee. I now promise, from this moment, sincerely to detest them, and never more to offend Thee. With Thy gracious help and assistance, I shall struggle against future temptations that may surround me, without permitting myself to be overcome by them. I shall solely rely on Thee, my gracious, good, and merciful Father, who hast kindly cherished, protected, and preserved an ungrateful child. Were it only for preserving my life, and not suffering me to perish unprepared, what must have been the obligations I am under to Thee, or what return can I ever make for so diswhat return can I ever make for so distinguished a favour? All Thou hast demanded is my heart, and that I will give Thee. Thou hast required me to offer myself wholly to Thee, and I will readily complete such a grateful sacrifice. Thou hast wanted me to turn from my evil ways, and to be converted: I will endeayour henceforth effectually to amend my life.

SECT. II.

Convert me to Thee, O good Lord, and I shall be truly converted. Preserve me from sin, and shower down on me an abundance of Thy divine graces. Were

it not for Thy infinite goodness, I should long since have been plunged in the flames of hell, like so many other impenitent sinners, who are now suffering there, surrounded with unhappy companions, plunged in burning lakes of pitch and brimstone. Wailing and gnashing their teeth in the greatest agony, their ears are assailed on all sides with lamentations, groans, and execrations of devils and damned souls. Their eyes are directed to the most horrible sights, visible even through the gloomy darkness around them. Whilst lurid flames give them them. Whilst lurid flames give them light to see each other undergoing most excruciating tortures, foul devils, the instruments of inflexible justice, are exulting over them, with most execrable reproaches and gestures. Their sense of smell is most loathsome in its nature, they being always suffocated and oppressed with a noisome stench of sulphur, brimstone, and a thousand other disagreeable odours. Their tests cannot be even gratified with Their taste cannot be even gratified with a single drop of water to cool their burning tongues. How must they lament, not having hearkened to the Almighty's solemn denunciations whilst on earth, refusing to

accept His pressing invitations, when now, they would give all they ever pos-sessed, or could desire on earth, for one short moment's mitigation of their dreadful punishment! How devoutly would they have spent their days, after present experience, if permitted to be born over again, and to pass their lives once more on this earth! What penance would they not perform in order to be reconciled to God! What anchorite could surpass or equal their exercises of austerity and self-denial! The most frightful deserts would become to them the most agreeable of habitations. The most unfrequented and remote places from human converse and society, would prove the most accep-table to them. O, my God, let me often attentively reflect on these considerations, and I can never more dare to offend Thee. Let me apply the case of damned persons to myself. Their dreadful condition ought to fill me with terror. Perhaps, many a condemned person might have been more tolerable in Thy sight, when snatched away from this life, than I am at present; men are punished for crimes that are light, probably, when compared

with mine. For the duties certain persons owed Thee, death and eternal suffering paid the just forfeit; whilst, like a kind creditor, Thou hast yet given me time to discharge the debt still due to Thee.

SECT. III.

I owe Thee a thousand various services and payments; yet I wickedly continue in debt, hardly ever refunding Thee an instalment of what is due. O dearest Lord, I am overwhelmed with confusion when I reflect on my delinquencies. Where shall I find words sufficient to extol Thy bounty and indulgence to me, a wretched sinner? Had I not been strangely infatuated, I should have gratefully acknowledged and repaid Thy goodness and bounty to me, for having thus prolonged my short and transitory life. O, from this moment, I detest all my sins from the bottom of my heart. How shall I dare longer to look in Thy face, whilst burdened with such a load of iniquities? Let me cry out for mercy, while time is yet left me. Let me delay

repentance no longer. Like the woman of Canaan, I will never cease to cry out until Thou hearkenest to my cry, Have mercy on me, O Lord, have mercy on me. But a still greater favour than prolonged life Thou hast conferred on me. The precious gift of salvation is by far the greatest benefit even Thou couldst bestow. I have been brought up and fostered in the bosom of our Holy Mother the Church, whilst so many Pagans, Infidels, Heretics and Schismatics are still excluded from it. Some of these had more generous natural qualifications and perhaps even better pretensions to salvation than I can lay claim to, by reason of having spent their lives in a less vicious or in a more orderly manner than that in which I have lived. Whilst some of those have often raised their voice in praise and prayer to God, according to their own method, I have oftentimes used the gift of speech to take His name in vain, perhaps to profane it. Thus, my God, I see Thy bounty encompass me on all sides, yet I remain insensible to Thy goodness. What if I were born in a savage state of society, addicted to all the errors of Paganism, or brought up as a heretic or sectary, whose opinions are entirely opposed to the teaching of our Holy Catholic Church. I should then have been miserable indeed, shut out from a view of Thy heavenly kingdom, and running on blindly in the darkness of my own ways.

SECT. IV.

What would have availed even my being in communion with the Catholic Church, if I refuse to approach the Sacraments necessary for my sanctification? I should have been deprived of many graces, although once freed from original or actual sin by Baptism. How could I become strengthened in the principles and practices of our holy religion, unless duly instructed and prepared for the reception of Confirmation? By penance worthily completed, I am cleansed from all my sins and enormities. But by giving Thyself to me in the Holy Eucharist, I receive the greatest favour Thou couldst bestow upon me; for at that heavenly banquet I am filled with most delicious food, that contains Thy body and blood,

Thy soul and Divinity. Thus in all Thy Sacraments, as applicable to our several necessities, Thou hast bestowed the greatest benefits on those who receive them with worthy dispositions. They are springs of Divine grace for those who desire to taste them, and placed as it were by the road side for accommodation and refreshment of each wearied traveller, who wishes to drink from these salutary fountains. Often have I been called to partake of them, but I have declined this invitation. Thou hast invited me, yet I obstinately refused to attend. In short, it would exceed the power of memory or eloquence to enumerate all the blessings and favours Thou hast bestowed upon me. Let me only regard a few of these Thy benefits. Thou gavest me being when I was as yet nothing. Thou hast bestowed upon me the comforts and convenience of civilized society and Christian life. Thou sendest me food, drink, and rest to refresh my body for daily labour. Thou hast bestowed health, strength, or capability with many necessary bodily advantages and accomplishments; my mind Thou hast gifted with knowledge,

free-will, memory, and other intellectual qualifications. Thou gavest raiment to cover my body, and Thy Divine Word to enlighten and protect my soul. Thou hast placed me in a climate every way fitted for my habit of living. Thou sendest down Thy rain to moisten the earth, and Thy sun to ripen or increase its fruits, grain, animal and vegetable productions. I have every necessary provided for me in abundance, so that, in fine, I may be said to want for no earthly possession.

SECT. V.

But of all Thy benefits, so profusely heaped on me, that favour of sending Thy only Son to assume our frail nature and to die on the cross for our redemption was unquestionably the greatest. By coming down from heaven He assumed the outward appearance of His own creatures, who were involved in the shades of sin and death. He was born during a cold winter's night, between the ox and ass, in a wretched stable near Bethlehem. When eight days old, He was circum-

cised, and His blood began to flow for us. Shortly afterwards, He was compelled to fly into Egypt, in order to avoid the vengeance of the cruel Herod. He suffered Himself to be led about by the devil, who strove to tempt Him by every wicked contrivance and suggestion. He went about the world for three years, hungry, thirsty, and without knowing where to lay His head, yet all this time watching, praying, doing good, and teaching the ignorant. Constantly assailed with the taunts, scoffs, and reproaches of Scribes, Pharisees, and false teachers, amongst the Jewish people; delivered to His enemies and betrayed by His own disciple; deserted and abandoned by the Apostles themselves, and thrice denied by the Prince of serves, and thrice denied by the Prince of the Apostles; He poured forth His Blood in large drops in the garden, praying to His Heavenly Father that the bitter chalice might pass from Him, yet in con-clusion showing His dutiful resignation, saying: "Nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt." (Matt. xxvi. 39.) O good Jesus, can I ever cease to forget all Thou hast suffered for me? Can I still be ungrateful to Thee, after all the blood Thou

hast shed for my redemption? Shall I not draw a remedy from Thy saving wounds, and apply the cure to my disordered soul? From this moment I offer what will be most acceptable to Thee,—namely, Thy infinite merits, with Thy sufferings, and cruel death on the cross. Thou wert led captive by a wretched rabble, and brought into the presence of the chief priest, then most falsely accused by a hired band of most abandoned perjurers, without replying one word to their unjust charges. Thou wouldst be struck on Thy meek and gentle face, so full of Divine Majesty, by a wicked ruffian; Thou wouldst be spit upon, scoffed, and insulted. Thou wert brought from Pilate to Herod, who in derision clothed Thee with a white garment, when he sent Thee back again to Pilate. Thou wert mangled with repeated stripes, and covered over with streaming wounds, by those soldiers, who scourged Thee at the pillar. The wicked robber Barabbas was most unjustly preferred to Thee. Thou wert clothed in a purple garment, Thy brows were covered with a crown of thorns, most cruelly pressed on Thy sacred head, until blood

freely flowed down Thy face and neck. In token of mock royalty, Thou wert given a reed for Thy sceptre. Thou wert next a reed for Thy sceptre. Thou wert next led away, staggering under the heavy weight of Thy cross to Mount Calvary, surrounded by a band of infuriate wretches. Upon arriving at the place of execution, stripping Thee of Thy clothes, Thy executioners nailed Thee on a cross, placing it in an upright position, and suspending two robbers beside Thee, one to the right, and another on the left. By one of these, Then went injuriously represented and Thou wert injuriously reproached and blasphemed. Thy garments were divided, and for Thy vesture Thy executioners cast lots. But raising Thy eyes, Thou criedst with a loud voice: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke xxiii. 34.) The unfeeling people called out, mocking Thee: "If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself."
(Luke xxiii. 37.) Thou wert, during Thy agony, and through derision, offered wine and vinegar to drink. Over Thy head was written this inscription, "This is Jesus, King of the Jews." Not that they confessed Thee to be such, but through mackers, as when wegging their heads mockery, as when wagging their heads

they cried in scorn: "Vah! Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save Thy own self: if Thou be the Son of God come down from the cross." (Matt. xxvii. 40.) Looking down Thou sawest Thy Blessed Virgin Mother, and Thy beloved disciple St. John, standing at the foot of Thy cross; then Thou saidst to Thy afflicted Mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" and turning to John again Thou saidst, "Behold thy mother." (John xix. 26, 27.) Knowing that all things which the Prophets foretold were then accomplished in Thy regard, Thou saidst, "I thirst," when a sponge dipped in vinegar was put into Thy mouth. Tasting it, Thou bowedst down Thy venerable head, and resignedst Thy spirit. Afterwards, when the soldiers came, finding Thee dead, one of them thrust a spear into Thy side, from which mingled blood and water issued. Here, at last, Thy earthly sufferings ended.

SECT. VI.

Thus, my redemption and the redemption of mankind had been accomplished.

By this Thy cruel passion and death, O meek Lamb of God, I have been delivered from the darkness of sin and death. O grant that I may never again crucify Thee by my crimes, and that I may never offend Thee more. From the bottom of my heart, I detest my former sins, and I now resolve never again to become the slave of my passions. What shall I say, O good Jesus, for having rebelled against Thee? Shall I not tremble with confusion and horror, at the sight of all my iniquities? Shall I ever cease to implore Thy mercy? Extend Thy pity towards me, O my God: take compassion on me, a sinful wretch. I shall never cease offering this petition to the end of my life: Thou hast redeemed me, and suffered for me, therefore have mercy on me. Thou hast purchased me with Thy precious blood. O grant that it may not be shed in vain: Thou hast created and saved me, therefore preserve me from sin and do not again permit me to destroy myself, and lose my soul for ever. Have mercy on me, O Lord, have mercy on me. Amen.

An Act of Faith.

Renew here your faith in reference to the Sacrament of Penance, which Christ instituted for the remission of your sins. Thank Him most earnestly for His gracious bounty to you, on this secount, and address Him in the following words:

SECT. I.

MY Divine Jesus, I most firmly believe that out of Thy bounty to us miserable sinners. Thou hast left to the pastors of Thy Church the power of forgiving sins. Whilst Peter was journeying with Thee to Cæsarea Philippi, Thou askest Thy apostles this question: "Whom do men say the Son of Man is?" They replied: "Some John the Baptist, others Elias. and others Jeremias or one of the Prophets:" Jesus said to them: "But whom do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art Christ. the Son of the Living God!" Then, having rewarded the faith of Peter by promising to make him head of the Church, against which the powers of hell shall not be able to prevail, Thou hast promised: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatso-ever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 13, 14, 15, 16, 19.) After Thy resurrection, entering into the place where Thy disciples were assembled, and saluting them, Thou saidst: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you." Saying this, Thou breathedst on them and saidst to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (John xx. 21, 22, 23.) Thus, my Lord Jesus, Thy mercy has been extended to me and all other wretched sinners, who have offended Thee by enormous crimes and transgressions. It is not alone for an offence once committed against Thee, Thou art ready to pardon me: but if my sins were numerous as grains of sand in the bottom of the sea, or atoms in the air, Thou still wouldst forgive me, if I sincerely repented of them. Thy authority is represented in the person of my confessor; for when he pronounces sentence of absolution, I should receive it as coming from Thy own sacred lips. But I likewise know, that if I am not heartily sorry for my sins, and resolved never more to offend Thee hereafter, this absolution pronounced by the priest will be of no effect. If I do not approach this Sacrament sufficiently prepared, I likewise know, that unhappily I come to it without the necessary dispositions.

SECT. II.

Thus, my Lord, I understand Thy requirements; but how often do I fulfil them? What does it avail me, therefore, to hear Thee speak, and yet not attend to Thy instructions? Can I expect salvation by being a hearer only, and not a doer of Thy law? No, I am convinced I cannot. "Without faith it is impossible to please God, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." But faith must be manifested by good works. An operative faith shall henceforth be the mainspring of all my actions, and a rule of conduct for the remainder of my life. I believe whatsoever the Holy Roman Catholic Church proposes to my belief, and I accept

nothing contrary to her teaching and doctrine. I believe all those truths which God has revealed to her; which so many noble martyrs have sealed with their blood; which so many holy doctors have taught; and which all ages and generations, from the commencement of the Christian era to this present time, have maintained, not alone regarding the Sacrament of Penance, but in reference to every other article of Divine Faith. Henceforth, with Thy grace I will not only believe as a Catholic, but think and act like a Catholic; for to what purpose would my Faith tend, were I to live as a heathen or a publican? I throw myself at the foot of Thy throne, professing to trust solely in Thee, only to love and serve Thee. Lord, "increase our faith." (Luke xvii. 5.) I most heartily thank Thee, good Jesus, that I have been instructed within the bosom of Thy Holy Catholic Church. In this faith as I have lived, so I also hope happily to die, and to obtain an eternity of happiness in the life to come. Amen,

An Act of Adoration.

Place yourself in the presence of God. Pour out all the gratitude of your soul, offer your whole being to Him, and beg of Him to accept this oblation. Adore Him with all the powers of your soul; praise and give Him thanks for all His beneats to you. Resolve never more to offend Him, especially with your tongue; but continue henceforth to praise and glorify Him on earth, that you may be rewarded for ever in heaven.

SECT. I.

SWEET Jesus, sure refuge of all afflicted sinners! O innocent Lamb, who taketh away the sins of the world! O good Shepherd, who seeketh after the strayed sheep! O bounteous parent, who killeth the fatted calf for Thy prodigal child, when he returns to Thee! O dearest Jesus, King of Glory, who doth permit the elect to participate in Thy glory! O bountiful Father of the poor, receive us into Thy mercy who are weak and helpless of ourselves, unless assisted by Thee, through Thy goodness and bountiful Providence! O admirable Lord, the tongues of angels, much less those of men, could never describe all Thy bounty, mercy, glory, and other perfections. I adore

Thee with all my heart and soul; I shall never cease to celebrate Thy praise. Let my weak and feeble voice join with the voices of those saints and angels, who are constantly surrounding Thy heavenly throne, both day and night, singing with a loud voice, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Hosanna to the highest. Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna to the highest." Let me also unite in their hymns of praise, adoration, and thanksgiving, repeating with them their canticles and heavenly Hallelujahs! Let me send forth an agreeable incense of prayer from my heart, that it may ascend before Thy throne, with the prayers of the four-andtwenty ancients, in Thy heavenly Jerusalem. Let my feeble tongue praise Thy holy name, so far as it may be able, together with the sacred strains of their harps. Here, if I cannot celebrate Thy praises, and offer gifts to Thee, meritorious as those tendered by Thy saints and angels, yet will I dedicate to Thee my small tribute of affection for I know that although; it be of little value in itself, Thou wilt

deign to accept it, if offered through a pure motive.

SECT. II.

Draw my heart, therefore, to Thyself, where my only treasure lies, and wean it from all affection towards this sinful world. Unfasten the chains of sin, and the snares of Satan; bind my soul to Thyself, so that it may rest secure amidst all temptations and dangers to which it is exposed, when left to the bent of its own wayward inclinations. There is nothing in this world more dangerous to me than the unbridled force of my passions. Alas! as I know from sad experience, these enemies are very powerful against me, I being too faint-hearted, and not possessed of sufficient courage to struggle with and guard myself from their destructive influences. It is assuredly far better to serve a good rather than a bad master. If I yield to my passions, I cannot serve my God. I may set them at defiance, however, if I always love and fear my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. By yielding to my passions I become a wretched bondsman; but by serving Jesus in spirit and in truth, I become an emancipated freedman. To which of these masters it is better for me to belong, does not admit of question. Such, O my God, has been my state of thraldom and degradation, that of myself I would not have had courage to rise, unless Thou didst graciously assist me with Thy divine graces. Aid me, therefore, O my God, stretch forth Thy hand to help me, and I will make an effort to rise, and burst those shackles that have hitherto bound me. How fearful is the yoke of sin! To me it indeed appears unaccountable, why I should not desire to cast off this weighty burden. If a temporal king or a cruel tyrant were to shut me up within a dun-geon, and to load me with chains, how indignant should I not feel, and how irksome must be my confinement! Were I obliged to endure this miserable bondage, would I not endeavour by every possible means to extricate myself from such a state of captivity? And if another king more powerful than my oppressor were to come and urge me to remove these chains, with what joy would I not embrace such an

opportunity for liberating myself! What must have been my gratitude towards such a monarch? Would I not desire, to live under his protection, to serve and obey him ever after, and cheerfully to obey him ever after, and cheerfully to escape from the power of a cruel tyrant? Yet the parity of my case is here exactly reproduced. Instead of a temporal oppressor, my spiritual tyrant, the devil, has fettered me with his snares and chains, keeping me in a state of bondage the most miserable that can be imagined. And Jesus Christ, who is the more powerful King, invites me to rise; He even importunes me, telling me He will assist me, and by the slightest exertion on my part, I might escape without the walls of my prison, entirely free, so that I may set at defiance my enemy's power and oppression. All this I well know to be true, as if it were repeated to me a pression. All this I well know to be true, as if it were repeated to me a thousand times, yet I still continue in slavery, and repine not under my degradation. I remain in my old state of bondage, a miserable slave; and I would not subject myself to the good King, lest I might really become a freedman. How blind I am to my own true interest! How foolish, wicked and obstinate on my part to refuse liberation from an odious servitude! Yet, from henceforth, I will set my oppressor at defiance, nor care to provoke his enmity, provided in turning from him, I bear true allegiance to my God. Yes, good Lord, receive Thy prodigal child, and let Thy servant rejoice hereafter in Thy kingdom, for I know that there is "joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." (Luke xv. 7.)

SECT. III.

What benefits, O Lord, have I not received from Thee? No tongue could ever enumerate them. How have I repaid Thee for them? I know but very indifferently. This I feel, that my crimes are most grievous; but grant me the grace of atonement for them. And shall I not be held accountable for their commission at the last day? How aptly does not that parable of the buried talents apply to me! (Matthew xxv. 14-23.) I have received such talents; but unlike those

careful servants, who went their way, and gained much over that sum they received, instead of turning mine to good account, I have gone and buried them in the earth, thereby gaining nothing, but rather losing everything, since I have displeased my Lord, who delivered them to me. Shall this excuse avail me: "Lord, I know that Thou art a hard man: Thou reapest where Thou hast not sown, and gatherest where Thou hast not strewed. And being afraid, I went and hid Thy talent in the earth: behold Thou hast here that which is Thine." Such was the statement of an unprofitable servant. But must I not be overwhelmed with confusion, when I hear my justly incensed Master answering me in these words: "Wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed: thou oughtest therefore to have committed My money to the bankers, and at My coming, I should have received My own with usury. Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall abound:

but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
(Matthew xxv. 24-30.) Let me now examine, O my Lord, what a debt I owe Thee, and whether it has been discharged. Let me see if I have turned over my talent to the bankers, and received interest upon it. Let me examine my accounts, and set Thy just demands against my claims, and I shall see how utterly disproclaims, and I shail see now utterly disproportioned my efforts have been to Thy requirements. I fear indeed my talent has lain uselessly in my hands. Although I have long since received it, I have made little, if any, profit by it, but it is now time for me to employ it in some useful manner. Let me then begin, and turn it to usury before my Lord comes home, and demands His account. The time when He will approach is altogether hidden from me; and it must be a terrible thing to fall unprepared into the hands of the living God. What if He were to summon me now, whilst my talent lies uselessly beside me? I could not offer any available excuse to the offended Deity. I could not presume to tender Him this buried talent, without greatly offending Him.

SECT. IV.

O my God, fill my soul with gratitude. whilst I recount all Thy gifts to me, and how little I have deserved them. When I had no existence, Thou willest that I should be created, and broughtest me into this world; yet I seem resolved to rush again towards that eternal death, which awaits all great sinners. I seem determined to uncreate myself, and destroy all the good for which I have been created. Whilst I was a child, Thou didst not frown on the follies of my youth, until I had arrived at the years of discretion; and now, when I know how to distinguish between good and evil, I always avoid the former, and rush on headlong to the latter, thereby provoking Thy just indignation, and deserving the wrath to come. When brought forth into this world, I was not found amongst ignorant, idolatrous, and barbarous savages, hardly endued with that cultivated intellect distinguishing the civi-

lized portion of mankind. Yet I am still more barbarous and impious than any savage or idolator, for I well know my duty to God, still I do not love or serve Him. Whilst these are ignorant regarding the attributes of a supreme Deity, they are perhaps more sincere and devoted in their worship of wooden images, or other inanimate or animated objects, sup-posing some divine power inherent there-in; whilst with all my opportunities for instruction and devotion, I am cold and indifferent towards the great Creator of heaven and earth. In like manner, when I was born, it was not perhaps of parents hostile to the tenets of our Holy Catholic Church; but, in any case, I have been well instructed already regarding her doctrines, discipline, and precepts; yet I live more unconcernedly than many pagans, infidels, and heretics. When I know the Church teachings and exhortations to do penance for my sins, and do not perform what is required of me, I ought to be held more guilty on that account. I have received in greater measure than others, all necessaries of life, food, drink, clothing, and what return have I made for

them? Alas! none, my God, for I seldom or never give Thee thanks for them. I have possessed, to a greater extent than many others, mental acquirements, memory, will, talents, understanding, a knowledge of Thy will, and what is opposed to it; yet I have made a bad use of all these faculties. Although I have understanding, I do not seem to consider sufficiently God's goodness towards me; my memory, instead of being employed in recalling many instances of His mercy, and my ingratitude, are occupied in dwelling on past pleasures or sinful recollections. I make a bad use of my will, in opposing divine appointments, for whatsoever is contrary to His holy will generally pleases me, so perverse am I in crossing and thwarting all His righteous measures. My talents have never been sufficiently employed in giving good advice to those that need it, in reconciling those at variance, in instructing the ignorant, in consoling those needing consolation, or in using the means necessary to procure my own salvation.

SECT. V.

I seem as if I knew nothing of Thy will, for I seldom execute it, and although I well understand what is directly opposed to Thy wishes, I generally prefer the performance of my own wayward projects. Whilst many poor creatures have not the conveniences, or even the necessaries of life, I enjoy a fair measure of such comforts; and yet perhaps I am not half so thankful for benefits I receive, as these more indigent people are for their poor means of living. I have had better opportunities than many for serving and adoring God; yet I have altogether neglected Him, setting my heart on worldly thoughts and creatures, thereby loving them and not my Creator. I have been placed on this earth for the purpose of serving and adoring Him, that I may rejoice with Him hereafter in His heavenly kingdom; but instead of complying with those conditions, I act quite contrary to the end for which I have been created, by becoming a slave to sin and to the devil, my mortal enemies, by giving vent to all

my passions, by indulging my lawless desires, and by worshipping the mammon of iniquity. In fine, I seem to rush on to my own destruction, by plunging my-self into the flames of hell, there to groan, wail, and gnash my teeth everlast-ingly, in company with damned souls. I have been preserved from death, that I may, even now, begin to repent, and serve may, even now, begin to repent, and serve an offended God, who was so good in all things to me. Yet I daily grow more hardened in wickedness, and my crimes are continually on the increase. Thou warnest me of my situation; I still pay little regard to Thy admonitions. Thou hast dragged me in a manner from the precipice; whilst I blindly rush on to take the fatal plunge. Thou hast urged me to a compliance with Thy divine will; and I permit Thy words of admonition to page permit Thy words of admonition to pass by me unregarded, as the raving winds. Thou holdest forth enticements, to allure me to Thy service, whilst I avoid their consideration, lest perhaps I should be captivated and moved by them. Thou hast reached my heart by Thy holy inspirations, and again my desires to possess Thee quickly subside. Thou callest me, yet I hear Thee not; in fine, Thou commandest me to do Thy will in all things, whilst still I refuse to obey Thee. The account of all Thy benefits, mercies, goodness, and bounties to me, would fill large volumes. Suffice it, therefore, to say. I do not want so much as one real blessing or favour, which has not been bestowed on me, a vile wretch, a mere worm of the earth-I, who have had the insolence and audacity to offend and defy the Trinity of Persons in one God. O my most bounteous Creator, Redeemer. and Sanctifier! Ungrateful wretch that I am, why should I presume to revolt against the Almighty? My God, look down on me from Thy holy place, search well my heart, remove from it all the enormity and filth of sin. If it be possible, that by repentance it can become a receptacle for Thy Divine Majesty, make my once depraved heart Thy future habitation.

SECT. VI.

I well know I am quite unworthy to receive such honour as I aspire to, that the great King of heaven and earth should become my Guest, and illuminate my soul with the rays of His divine grace. Yet I am as certainly convinced, that if, on my own part, I prepare my interior in the most befitting manner, according to the best of my ability, He will deign to honour me with His presence, and become my constant Guest. What goodness is there not manifested in this condescen-Were I in a state of life sufficiently exalted to enable me to entertain any respected temporal sovereign, how would I not consider myself honoured by receiving him within my house; and yet I scarcely think of allowing the Almighty King of heaven and earth to enter and take up His residence in my soul, though it is much easier for me to receive the Eternal King in this manner, than to procure the visit of any temporal prince. Strange infatuation! Is a temporal to be preferred before an Eternal King? The chief ruler of this or any other country is reverenced, his friendship is desired, and his favours are often purchased at a very dear rate. And after all, perhaps, this influence will be of no avail for those

that procure his countenance and protection, even in the management of their temporal affairs. Whereas, the Allpowerful King of heaven and earth is disregarded and despised, although He is able, without a moment's warning, to cut short that slender thread of life yet remaining intact for the most exalted earthly king. The Almighty can mar any projects in relation to our temporal con-cerns, thereby destroying all our depend-ing hopes. The disposal of both earthly and heavenly affairs are in His hands; He can order all things as He pleases for our advantage or disappointment. Yet we seldom look to Him, or endeavour to make Him our Friend, even in any inferior interest, although we know He disposes of all matters with supreme wisdom, and in a manner most suitable to our situation in life. The least solicitation, if it be earnest, on our parts, and to obtain a lawful object, may prevail with Him to grant our request. If it be neither desirable nor expedient for our eternal welfare, of course it may not be consistent with His justice and goodness, to indulge our unreasonable expectations.

Whatever we earnestly ask of Thee, O Lord, that concerns our eternal salvation, we are almost sure to obtain. If we ask for spiritual gifts, with sincere and humble hearts, begging for them through the merits of Thy only-begotten Son, coequal with Thee before all ages, who assumed human nature, and died on the cross for our salvation, who afterwards arose from the grave, and now sits at Thy right hand in the kingdom of endless glory, we shall assuredly triumph over all the powers of darkness. We know that if we ask, we shall receive, if we seek, we shall find, and if we knock, it shall be opened unto us. I therefore ask of Thee this one request, O Lord, that Thou wouldst be graciously pleased to grant me grace never to offend Thee more: from this time forward may I never cease from praising and glorifying Thy holy name-a name which above all other names is blessed.

SECT. VII.

Instead of being engaged in extolling Thy greatness, and entreating Thee for mercy, my tongue has been too often em-ployed, perhaps, in expressions of a dis-respectful or injurious tendency, thereby breaking the second commandment, which says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord in vain." O, good Jesus! regard not the multitude of my sins, but grant me pardon, and I will endeavour to persevere, through Thy gracious goodness, in this my fixed resolution, to abstain from all sin, but especially mortal, to watch over my thoughts that I may not offend Thee with my heart; my deeds, that I may not offend Thee with my members or senses; and my tongue, that I may not offend Thee by my words; I shall henceforth employ all my actions, thoughts, and words, to promote Thy greater honour and glory. Blessed be Thy name, for ever and ever, O, good Lord! May all generations now living adore Thee, and hereafter serve Thee for an endless eternity! May Thy blessing rest upon me as upon all those who love and fear Thy holy and venerable name! O, my Lord, I render Thee most hearty

thanks, I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I adore and glorify Thee for Thy bounteous mercies to me, Thy ungrateful, unnatural, and rebellious child; I who have endeavoured to escape from Thy protection, to resign myself to the miserable slavery of the devil, the prince of darkness, the monarch of hell, the rebellious Lucifer, chief of the fallen angels! To Thee, O God, to Thee I now resign myself, hoping as I will use all my endeavours to please Thee and to avoid offending Thee, that Thou wilt graciously vouchsafe to grant me pardon of my past sins, and receive me again into Thy mercy. As I purpose to serve Thee here on earth, so may T rejoice with Thee hereafter, in Thy heavenly kingdom. Let others pursue, if they will, their various passions, studies, and inclinations in this life, the only great object of my ambition will be to adore, love, and enjoy in heaven for ever and ever, that Almighty Father who reigneth, and liveth with Jesus Christ, His Divine Son, and with the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

An Act of Hope.

Conceive an ardent desire of possessing the friendship and protection of God. Beg of Him, through the goodness and merits of His Divine Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for your redemption, to grant you pardon of your offences, that you may be called hereafter to the glory of His elect, to serve and enjoy Him for ever in heaven. Make a firm resolution that you will never despair in His mercy and goodness, knowing that even if your sins be many and enormous, through the effects of His clemency they can be entirely removed. Resolve never to fall into that most dangerous error of presuming too blindly on the tolerance of God towards sinners. Many a thoughtless person is carried away with the hope of time given for future repentance, whilst he continues regardless of his deplorable state till the hour of death. hardly ever thinking on God and his own impenitent condition. And always keep this thought fixed in your mind, that no course is more dangerous than that you should safely steer between, avoiding Despair on the one side, and Presumption on the other.

SECT. I.

MY God, grant me Thy favour and protection, I desire no more: grant me Thy friendship, and I shall indeed secure a true, and sincere friend. What need I care for the displeasure of this world, if the God of heaven and earth smile complacently upon me; I need not regard its threats, if I have the Almighty to protect me! If He is merciful to me,

I need not regard the injustice of men. If I enjoy heavenly comfort, why should I repine at the adversities I may meet with in the world! If any person assail me with taunts and bitter reproaches, I still can have recourse to Thy parental counsels and sweet consolations. Were my sins as numerous as drops of water in the ocean, or grains of dust on this earth, I will never cease to cry aloud for Thy mercy. I know Thou wilt pardon them, even if they be a thousand times more numerous, provided on my part I be heartily sorry for them, and resolved to surrender myself unreservedly henceforth into Thy hands. I will endeavour to avoid all unruly temptations and desires of my own flesh, and all snares of those dangerous enemies the devil and the world.

SECT. II.

I confide alone in Thy assistance and Divine protection, hoping that I will never be forsaken by Thee, even in my greatest necessities. I trust in Thy gracious mercy, for Thou wilt assuredly have pity on me, a wretched and vile worm of the earth, although utterly destitute of any merit, and undeserving the least of Thy favours. I know that, like the Good Shepherd, who giveth His life for His sheep, Thou wilt secure me within Thy fold. (John x. 11-16.) In Thee I firmly trust, I seek Thee as Thou hast sought for me, a wanderer and an outcast. With the rest of Thy faithful flock I desire to feed, that I may not escape from Thy guidance, nor stray from out the living pastures. The Good Shepherd will protect me, if I trust to His protection, and fly to Him as to my best guide and guardian. That prowling wolf, the devil, and my mortal enemy, will seek every opportunity of breaking into the enclosure in which I am placed, in order to seize and devour my soul and body, separating me thereby from the flock of Christ. When he approaches, my only resource is to call immediately on the Good Shepherd, and seek His assistance. He will assuredly protect me, and bring me to a place of protect me, and bring me to a place of safety with those other sheep that seek His protection. But if, as in the parable of the lost sheep, I have happened to stray

from Thee, O my Good Lord, leave the rest of Thy flock in the desert for a time, and bear me away from my spiritual foes. And when at length the Good Shepherd found His lost sheep, placing it on His shoulders, He bore it homewards to the rest of His flock. When He hath preserved me in like manner, He will call His friends and neighbours together, saying to them these words: "Rejoice with Me, because I have found My sheep that was lost." (Luke, xv. 6.) For I know, that in Thy heavenly kingdom there is more joy for one sinner that truly repenteth, than for ninety-nine just who need not repentance. Yes, O my God, inflamed with an ardent desire of enjoying Thee hereafter, in Thy heavenly kingdom, I consecrate all things to Thee which Thou hast given me, as Thou alone knowest how they should be turned to the best purposes. Health, riches, poverty, sickness, honours, reproaches, titles, property, character, and life itself, I entirely resign into Thy keeping. I am ready to forfeit or endure each and all of these, for Thy sake, or according to Thy pleasure. If I have health, I will thank Thee for bestowing it

on me; if sickness, I will never repine at whatsoever I may suffer, but accept it from Thy hands as a just punishment and infliction, due to me because of my sins and offences committed against Thee. If I have worldly means, I will make such a use of them, as shall be most pleasing to Thee, by liberally assisting the poor, and supplying them with worldly necessaries. If I am poor, I will have at least this consolation, that I bear some resemconsolation, that I bear some resemblance to my Divine Master in this respect, whilst on earth. I shall, also, be like His apostles, who renounced their earthly goods, wives or children, to follow Christ, and become truly His disciples. They had just reasons for so doing, having this promise from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself, being the first word He spoke in His Sermon on the Mount, when multitudes followed Him: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 3.) O poverty to be desired, which gives us an earnest of the heavenly kingdom. May a love of holy poverty ever animate us, to embrace even its inconveniencies with joy. Grant me this spirit,

good Jesus; in all things I desire submission to Thy decrees. If I hold any position of honour or respect amongst my fellow creatures, it shall be employed in the advancement of Thy honour and service, by restraining the growth of vice, and by promoting the reign of virtue in the minds of those who have any regard for my authority or influence. I will teach them by my exemple to feer to teach them, by my exemple, to fear, to teach them, by my exemple, to fear, to love, and to obey Thee, thereby advancing so far as lies within my power their interests, and the promotion of Christian feeling, by any little influence of station or position with which I may be invested. For I know that Thou wilt be well pleased to have Thy reign of justice extended on earth. As for human reproaches, why should I record them knowing as I do should I regard them, knowing as I do, that if undeserved, Thou wilt not, O my God, attend to idle or malignant assertions, coming from those who have sought to injure me in the estimation of my fellow creatures. Perhaps I have justly deserved censure, and if so, the only means left me for replying to them, and recover-ing my tarnished reputation, must be an endeavour to amend my bad actions, by advancing more steadfastly hereafter in the paths of virtue.

SECT. III.

If the best and most virtuous men in this world are not without reproach, why should a worthless, insignificant, vile, and ungrateful wretch like myself repine? Why should I fear the taunts and scoffs of men if they are not deserved? And if I really deserve them, why should I complain, when I have given just occasion for being reviled? Let me bear reproaches lightly, whether guilty or innocent, provided they do not prejudice me in the sight of God. But all the insults I have have hitherto received or ever can receive, are as nothing when compared to those which our Divine Redeemer sustained on my account, and for the sake of such sinners as I am. When I reflect on these injuries I have every reason to be patient, under the indignities I may receive from my fellow creatures. He, the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth, did not repine on account of the reproaches and insults of His own chosen people the Jews, whom

He has favoured above all other nations; and elected from others as regarded in the order of Divine vocation; yet, not-withstanding, they were first amongst His-creatures to offer indignity and injury to the Son of Man. A vile reptile of the earth, formed of dust and ashes, I am indignant if despised by men, even when giving me the slightest provocation, whilst Jesus Christ, in the midst of His sufferings, made use only of this charitable language: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke, xxiii. 34.) Thou wert stripped of Thy garments, and nailed to a cross, in the garments, and named to a cross, in the sight of the Jewish people, reviling Thee, and crying out: "If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself." (Luke, xxiii. 37.) What insults or injuries could exceed these; yet how patiently Thou hast endured them for my sake. Here indeed is an example of patience, here is a model for me to follow, when suffering from the calumnies and persecutions of men. Take heed, then, all you who endeavour to revile me, for I shall never more feel aggrieved at the worst things men can speak against me. When I have earthly

possessions, let me not be too arrogant, or filled with a vain conceit, by deeming myself superior to my fellow creatures; but let my means for doing good be employed, in giving additional weight to whatsoever Thou hast sanctioned. If I have this property, however small, let it be also employed in promoting Thy work. be also employed in promoting Thy work. I can the more readily give alms to the needy, and be the means of preserving the morals and lives of many poor creatures. But whilst I am thus occupied, let me not parade my actions publicly in the streets, or sound a trumpet before me like the hypocritical Pharisees, for Thou hast said: "When thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will reward thee." (Matthew, vi. 3, 4.)

SECT. IV.

Preserved, as I have hitherto been, to live for some time on this earth, let me begin henceforth to lead a new life; for the one I have already spent has been full of sin and ingratitude to God. If I must be called away shortly by death, let me not therefore, repine; since it is a mercy granted me by Almighty God, to rescue me from the infidelities and vices of this world, and to reward me with the joys of heaven. Pardon me my offences, O my God, through the infinite goodness and merits of Thy Divine Son, Jesus Christ, who for our salvation came down from heaven and suffered ignominiously on the cross. This Secred Victim is the most acceptable sacrifice I can offer Thee, therefore accept His gracious atonement to supply for my demerits. Do not reject me, O Lord, or turn away from me, for if Thou dost condemn me, who will receive me? I expect, O my God, to enjoy Thee one day in Thy heavenly kingdom, therefore, do not disappoint my earnest anticipations. In company with the saints and angels, may I sing for ever Thy praises in heaven. Let me always firmly hope in Thee, O my God, for I well know, if I trust in Thee, Thou wilt never suffer me to become an outcast. Despair is, of all things, the most to be deprecated; for God will be greatly displeased by a want of

reliance on His unfailing promises, regarding the forgiveness of sins, with sincere repentance on my part. Thousands of unhappy souls, by want of this courage and confidence in His goodness and mercy, are now plunged in the lowest abyss of hell, although they might have enjoyed eternal life with the saints and angels, if they had firmly hoped in God's mercy. Let me resolve from this hour never to Let me resolve from this hour never to despair in Thy infinite goodness and clemency; for if my sins were as scarlet, they can be rendered white as snow, if numerous beyond conception, they can be removed through Thy divine grace. The vice of presumption, however differing from despair, is nevertheless quite as dangerous and deplorable; for by blindly presuming in the goodness of God, we often allow ourselves to be carried away by a rapid stream and over a fatal precipice. Deluded by a false opinion, that we can at any moment obtain the favour of Almighty God, without much present trouble in seeking to find Him through the channels of His divine grace, we run on from day to day, and from year to year, in our sins, never repenting of them or

earnestly seeking to have them cancelled. Grant, O Lord, that I may not rush after this manner to mine own destruction, never thinking on, or hoping in Thee, until at last death comes upon me unawares, and surprises me, before I am allowed time to repent. The moment, the hour, the day, or the year, in which death shall approach, is altogether hidden from me. If I delay repentance until that fatal moment, I may be cut off unexpectedly and unprepared, because the time and opportunity for reconciliation are altogether uncertain, and depend solely on the decrees of Thy providence. It is foolish in the extreme for me to trust my eternal salvation to a mere chance, when, with a little effort on my part, I could be assured of future reward amongst the elect of Christ's kingdom. Must I be so blind to my own eternal interests, as to neglect this favourable opportunity for securing to myself an immortal crown in heaven? What ignorance, blindness, and insanity! Let me, O my God, never fall into these perilous extremes, but, like a skilful pilot, may I steer my course safely between despair on the one side and presumption on the other, that I may not be wrecked on either of those dangerous rocks, which have proved fatal to so many souls. Let me pass through those difficult straits, guided by Thy holy inspirations, and by a steady perseverance in the way of Thy admirable law, that I may arrive safely in the destined port. I confidently hope, by sincere repentance, to obtain full remission of all my past offences and transgressions. Hereafter, may I enjoy Thy sacred presence, O my God, in Thy heavenly kingdom, always rejoicing there with Thy saints and angels. Amen.

An Act of Charity.

Make a resolution to love God above all things, and your neighbour as yourself. Consider whether you have ever entertained any feelings of hatred or envy against your fellow creatures, and if so, you must conceive great sorrow. If you refuse to pardon your neighbour's offences, you cannot deserve God's pardon for your sins. Resolve to suffer every loss rather than that of God's love and friendship. Present all His graces and favours as an offering to Him, since from His hands you have received every thing you possess. Conform, in all things to His divine will, that He may be the better pleased with you. Beg of Him to accept your earnest desires of becoming His dutiful child here, that you may inherit hereafter His heavenly kingdom. Think on all He has done and suffered for love of you, that you may be

more inflamed with a love of Him, and more faithfully serve Him, reflecting on His labours, passion, sufferings, and death on the cross.

SECT. I.

MY God! the only joy of my heart, I love, adore, and glorify Thee. My only comfort and delight, "Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee." (John xxi. 17.) Thou hast created all things; yet few persons prefer Thee before objects of Thy creation. I fear, O my God, that I have been amongst the number of those insensates: and I certainly have not loved Thee as my duty obliges. O my God, I know that if I had truly loved Thee, I would have kept Thy commandments. This would be the true test of showing my love for Thee. In this manner, and thus only, could I serve, obey, and really love Thee. I am sorry that I should have been so deluded, as to render Thee my enemy; but let me henceforth endeavour to make amends for my former neglect of duty. Let me love Thee above all things, to the very end of my life. Let me seek protection from

Thee in all difficulties and dangers. Let me make Thee a lover of Thy own help-less creature, Thy disobedient and trembling slave, who has dared to rebel against Thee. O indulgent Father, who hast so kindly borne with Thy ungrateful creature, O good Lord, do not regard those sins committed against Thee; do not punish me in Thine anger. I know that Thou delightest to exercise Thy mercy, rather than Thy justice. Have mercy then on Thy poor suppliant, and I shall not regard the most unfortunate accidents that can happen to me, during my progress through this tempestuous and uncertain life. Next to Thee, I shall love my neighbour as myself, and even seek to be reconciled to mine enemies: for I know, "that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of hell fire." (Matthew v. 22.) I desire in all concerns of life to be actuated by fraternal charity, whilst holding intercourse with men.

SECT. II.

Thou hast assured me also, that if I bring my gift to the altar, there to offer it, and yet have any hatred towards my brother, I must leave my offering before the altar, go first to be reconciled with my brother, and then, coming back, present my gift to Thee. Thou hast commanded me likewise, to love mine enemies, to do good to those that hate me; and to pray for those that persecute and calumniate me. When I repeat, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors," (Matthew vi. 12.) I dare not cherish any bad feelings against my neighbour; for, should I sin in this manner, I must entreat of Thee to entertain hostile feelings against myself, as I do against my neighbour. Any bad feeling, desire of revenge, or of injuring him in person, property, or character, I may have heretofore entertained against him, must now entirely disappear. I forgive him all those insults, or provocations he may have ever given me, hoping, as I do, that my heavenly Father will forgive me greater offences. All I now desire

is, that for his own sake and mine, he will do the same towards me, if I have so offended. Without true repentance, I am well aware that I cannot be forgiven. I desire nothing so much as Thy favour, and I shall never be happy until that be obtained. All other things are as nothing. when I possess Thy friendship and love; for I cannot enjoy life without Thy protection. I will undergo a privation of all things, fortune, property, goods, reputa-tion, yea, even life itself, rather than be deprived of Thy love. I offer all things to Thee, which Thou hast been pleased to bestow on me, unworthy as I am of Thy least favours; life, health, riches, property, possessions and talents, knowing as I do, that Thou alone hast the very best of titles to them all, since of all Thou hast been the giver. If Thou art pleased to send me crosses or afflictions, I am ready to undergo them for the love I bear towards Thee. If trials or temptations must be my lot, I likewise freely accept them.

SECT. III.

Thus, O God, whatever pleases Thee ought also to satisfy Thy unworthy creature. Let me seek to conform to Thy will in all things, that Thou mayest be pleased with my obedience. O God, I love Thee! O Thou great Creator of all things! accept my weak love, it is all that I can present Thee. I desire nothing so much as a return of Thy boundless love towards me, that, securing Thy affection here, I may enjoy Thee hereafter in Thy heavenly kingdom. By Baptism I was made an heir to the kingdom of heaven; then, O gracious Lord, do not disinherit me even for my frequent relapses into sin. If You receive me within your arms, my gratitude and joy shall be complete. This is all I desire; and in truth, what more could I wish for in this life? O my God, when I consider all Thou hast suffered, during the time Thou camest down from heaven to sojourn on this earth, I ought at least be moved with love for Thee, and with shame for my own ingratitude. Meditation on Thy sufferings ought to soften the most obdurate heart; especially considering Thou hadst not had occasion to suffer for Thyself, but solely that Thou mightest appease the decrees of Thy Eternal Father, pronounced against our first parents, Adam and Eve, with all their posterity. Our progenitors disobeyed Thy first precept, having eaten the forbidden fruit, through instigation of their artful adversary, the devil. By that crime we forfeited our title to the kingdom of heaven, and would have continued excluded therefrom, had not Jesus Christ offered Himself to His heavenly Father, as a ransom for the sins of mankind. What love could equal this? Where could so meritorious a Victim be found? Nothing less than the blood of a Man-God could appease the Almighty Father's offended justice, such was the guilt of one sin of disobedience. Yet I have not alone broken one of Thy precepts, or even two or three of Thy commandments; but I have violated all, since he that offends in one, becomes a transgressor against all. What punishment therefore may I not expect from Thee? I have offended Thee by almost every means left in my power. Shall I not at least be covered with shame and confusion, at the sight of my sins?

SECT. IV.

The most unfailing source, whence we draw bitter sorrow and ardent love, is to reflect on all that Thou hast done for our sake, how Thou wert fastened to a cross, with large nails, how Thy sacred flesh was mangled and torn with stripes, how Thou wert insulted and blasphemed. fine, hast Thou not suffered every cruelty that the malice of Thy torturers could invent, for Thy ungrateful servant, and such other ingrates as I am? And how intense should not be my love towards Thee when Thou hast endured such tortures for my sake! Alas, I am more wicked by far than the Jews; for if these knew who they crucified, they would never be guilty of Deicide. I have known that by every sin or transgression committed against Thy Divine Majesty I crucify to myself the Son of God, making Him a mockery. (Hebrews vi. 6.) When I know that by

sin I crucify the Son of God, it follows that I am much more guilty than even these fanatical Jews. I would blame them for committing an enormous crime, and yet I scarcely notice my own truly grievous offences. In the Gospel occurs this question: "Why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye?" (Matt. vii. 3.) First, therefore, it behoves me to cast out the beam from my own eye, that afterwards I may remove the mote from that of my brother. O my God, attend to my supplications: grant that I may ever reflect on this truth, and consider attentively, that by every mortal transgression, I crucify my dear Redeemer Jesus Christ, and make a mockery of Him. Grant, Lord, that my mockery of Him. Grant, Lord, that my love for Thee may increase, and become strengthened every day of my life. May I at length rejoice with Thee for all eternity in Thy heavenly kingdom. When death shall put a period to my mortal career in this life, may I become inebriated with Thy delights, whilst lost in the immensity of Thy Divine Love. Amen.

An Act of Humility.

Consider what God is, and what you are: how great is the difference between yourself and Him. Beg of Him to enable you to approach this great Sacrament, with the most profound humility. Resolve never to assume arrogant pretensions above your fellow creatures. In the sight of God all His creatures are alike in estimation; or if there be any exception of persons, a preference is given to him who most excels in virtue. Therefore, if we be desirous to exceed our neighbour in any manner, let us endeavour to surpass him in the practice of every virtue.

SECT. I.

HOW great is the majesty of Heaven's King, the Creator of all things, Father of the faithful, Treasure of the elect, and Lord of all the governors of this world! How can we imagine the exalted attributes of so noble, powerful and Almighty a King as Thou art! The kings of earth, most elevated in station, are immeasurably below Thee in power. If they exercise prerogative within the small precincts of their dominions, Thou rulest not only over them and their territories, but over all heaven, earth and hell. Thou canst direct, in a manner conformable to Thy will, the concerns of potentates

and rulers in their own and other states. If they enact laws for the regulation of their people and their kingdoms, Thou canst nullify those regulations and institute higher decrees to supérsede them; Thou art able to restrain or destroy their authority at Thy pleasure. Thou art able to curb their proceedings, and regulate the concerns of all nations. Earthly monarchs cannot be called Almighty as Thou art; for their jurisdiction does not extend beyond the limits of their territories; whereas Thou art King of Kings, and Governor over the most haughty emperors of this world. At a single nod of Thine, not only they, but all the powers of earth and heaven tremble.

SECT. II.

Whatsoever Thou hast decreed must be executed, and what has been destined for each person shall undoubtedly come to pass. If any one invested with earthly authority should command a thing to be done, or forbid any act to be performed, neither shall come to pass if Thou art

adverse to this order. What strange infatuation it is then for any man to say, To-morrow I must do such a thing, when he little knows whether God destines him to live one single hour. What signify earthly honours to Thine, or even worldly station! Whatever vain titles their fellow creatures may impose on rulers are in effect of very little consequence or duration. Men may be styled magistrates, justices, governors, kings, or emperors, but all these are empty and transitory honours. What are such names to all the glorious titles which truly and justly apply to Thee? Father of the Poor! Treasure of the faithful! Source of all comfort to those in need of it! Rich Prize of those desirous to possess Thee! Creator and Redeemer of all mankind! Good Shepherd ready at all times to lay down Thy life for Thy flock! Example of all virtues! The Way, the Truth, and the Life! These and a thousand other glorious titles all belong to Thee alone; for no other person can presume to lay the slightest claim to any one of them. As to the authority of earthly princes, so insignificant is it that they

cannot of themselves accomplish even the smallest amount of good. Thou tellest to each of them, as to the meanest of their subjects, "thou canst not make one hair white or black." (Matt. v. 36.) If then their power be so limited as this indicates, what ought not be their humility? Not even one hair of their heads can fall to the ground unknown to Thee, how therefore should they imagine that their actions can escape Thy all-seeing eye? Yet not they alone, but we in like manner, must learn to be truly humble. What has been already said of them can be applied to us with at least equal force; for this difference exists between them and us, that we are weak, we have much less power and human authority than they exercise.

SECT. III.

Alas, how insignificant must we be when in the sight of Almighty God, we are nothing more than mere dust and ashes, from which we were originally produced! We are only poor creeping worms of this earth, reptiles undeserving con-

sideration! We are miserable, vile, and wretched sinners, hardly worthy the name of slaves. Beasts or other living creatures devoid of reason will not offend Thee. But man-sinful and ungrateful man, the noblest of all Thy works-he endowed with reason, knowledge and understanding, favoured with Thy graces, sanctified by Thy Holy Spirit, and incited by Thy inspirations—this same man, the most base of all living creatures, has alone dared to lift up his head and hand against Thee, as if he only amongst all other creatures seemed willing to provoke Thy wrath, or excite Thy indignation against his ingratitude. Shall a vile sinful wretch then presume to look Thee in the face, after so many crimes, Thee in the face, after so many crimes, so many indignities, committed against Thy Divine Majesty? What can I now say in defence of myself? Can I plead that I know not those just laws of Thine intended for my guidance? I intend to repent hereafter shall I say? But why not now as well as at a future time? I rely on Thy mercy in giving me a time for repentance. True; but then I am commanded not to presume rashly on Thy

mercy. I have not at present courage to fight my adversary, the devil, I might urge; but I must do so hereafter,—will I be more resolved on this attack then, than I now am? He will have a still better opportunity and greater advantage for entrenching himself within my soul, for strengthening the lines he has drawn about me to prevent my escape, and for providing himself with all things necessary against my weakly devised scheme of conquest. The best time for attacking any enemy, all must allow, is when that adany enemy, all must allow, is when that adversary is ill provided with means requisite for carrying on war, when all his powers have not been concentrated, or when they are separated from him, and whilst are separated from him, and whilst union, discipline, or energy less prevail amongst his forces. When a tree is allowed to take root in any soil, by degrees it becomes firmer and larger, until at last its roots are found so deeply planted in the earth, that it is in a manner almost impossible to eradicate it: whereas, in the beginning it was only a slender sapling, capable of being pulled up with the slightest exertion. It is well known, even to the most ignorant, at

what time it would have been practi-cal to remove it; and this parallel be-tween a tree striking root in the earth, and the devil taking possession of a human soul, is almost exactly identical. Let me, therefore, pluck away from my heart, those roots and fibres of scandal or heart, those roots and fibres of scandal or sin, and cast them forth, before they become too firmly planted. Let me expel the enemy from my heart, and open its folds to Jesus Christ, who is continually knocking for admission. Let me with trimmed lamp and oil poured in it, go forth to meet the bridegroom, having the wedding garment upon me. O my God! grant that I may be filled with humility, and true simplicity of heart. Grant that I may approach this great sacrament with the necessary degree of preparation, and a due sense of my duty in obedience to a due sense of my duty in obedience to Thy precepts.

SECT. IV.

Few there are who have adequately weighed the important effects of this Sacrament. Too many persons who have not, approach it with a certain amount of

carelessness, nay almost with studied in-difference. Let it be my constant endeaofficence. Let it be my constant endeavour, therefore, to think on the attributes of God, so good, so wise, and so powerful; as also on my own weakness, defects and infidelities, that I may learn to be humble and diffident, that I may fear to disobey Thee, that I may serve Thee with joy and alacrity, that henceforth I may obey Thee and keep Thy commandments, wherein the whole duty of a Christian is included. Let me learn humility from included. Let me learn humility from the example of Thine only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was always assiduous to impress upon His followers the efficacy of this great virtue, not alone by His words, but by His example. He has said, "Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xviii. 3.) And what greater example of humility could He have afforded than to be born in a stable, and laid in a manger, on a mid-winter's night, whilst shivering with cold! Alas! what ought I not learn from this lesson. Ought I not blush with shame and confusion at the sight of my offences, and

my want of mortification, when I reflect on this single incident of Christ's birth? O God, I shall never cease to importune Thee for the grace of true humility, until Thou impart it to me. Henceforth, let me cease to be puffed up with arrogance, above other fellow creatures. If I happen to excel them in fortune, that is no reason why I should despise them; if I possess more shining talents, is it a reason why I should feel proud in the sight of God? If I possess the advantages of birth, stain 1 possess the advantages of birth, station, ability, fortune, appearance, or a naturally good habit of body, must I despise those who are deprived of these gifts, but who are not consequently less esteemed by Thee than I am? If I have more respectable connections than others, can that become a reason why I should boast of such accidental advantages? Most certainly not; for if others are closer allied to God than I am, of what value are my friends and relations to me? Such differences are at once removed when God has regard to other considerations. If I exceed others in virtue, I will then become an especial favourite, but if I do not, then certainly God will not

prefer me unjustly, before those who are more deserving. The opposite to this would be manifestly unjust, and the Almighty never yet did one single action that could be construed into an injustice by any of His creatures. In one thing alone ought I endeavour to excel my neighbour; and that is by endeavouring to surpass him in virtue. This would indeed be a laudable motive for ambition, and ought to be followed with eagerness. Let me therefore run on in this glorious course, and reach the goal of my happiness in the shortest possible time; let me be courageous when about to face any difficulty in pursuit of its accomplishment. Let me acquire the virtue of humility, for I know Thou hast said: "he that is the lesser among you all, he is the greater." (Matt. ix. 48.) Grant that in all things I may obey Thee, fear Thee, and be truly humble. Amen.

FERVENT ASPIRATIONS WHICH MAY BE REPEATED OFTEN BEFORE CONFESSION.

MY God, give me grace never more to offend Thee.

O my God, teach me to love Thee with all my heart and soul, and with great fervour, for time and eternity.

Too late have I known Thee, O Infinite

Goodness !

Too late have I loved Thee, O Eternal

Beauty!

To Thee, O God, to Thee alone, be all honour and glory, and praise, and adoration, for ever.

Mortify in me, O Jesus, whatever displeases Thee, and make me live hence-

forth according to Thy holy Law.

O blessed Jesus, give me grace to learn from Thee to be meek and humble of heart, that I may be united with Thee, and find rest for my soul.

O my God and my all, teach me to do

Thy holy will in all things.

O Lord, keep me from sin during life, and grant me the grace of a happy death.

O Fountain of all goodness, have mercy on me t

Digitized by Google

O my God, grant me grace to perform all my works, with a pure intention of pleasing Thee.

Let the name of the Lord be for ever

blessed.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. Amen.

A PRAYER BEFORE WE ENTER THE CONFESSIONAL.

MY God, guilty as I am of many sins and imperfections, committed against Thy Divine Majesty, I approach Thy sacred tribunal, fully convinced of my own unworthiness. Send down Thy rays of Divine light, that they may illuminate my soul, and lay Thou before my mind most clearly all my hidden faults and transgressions. Remove the veil that hides my sins from me, that I may be the better able to confess them, and repel every future inclination to offend Thee. If any of these my crimes be hidden from me, I beseech Thee that I may be pardoned them, together with those which

I have been enabled to discover and confess. Take compassion on me, O Lord, and grant that I may be released from those fetters by which I have been so long bound. Make me truly sorrowful for my offences. Amen.

Go now to the Confessional with the greatest humility and recollection. Whilst the priest may be engaged in hearing the Confession of other persons before you can approach him, you might kneel down, and blessing yourself, make the sign of the cross on your forehead, repeating the following prayers.

MY good Lord, deign now to purify my soul from every affection to sin, and take possession of my heart, which ought always to have been Thine by a thousand titles; but, alas! so perverse have I been, that I seemed desirous of keeping it from Thee rather than of surrendering it to Thy holy influences.

A CCEPT now my desires of becoming wholly Thine, though unworthy of such an honour. Instead of being classed with the most wretched of slaves, I am now promised Thy favour and protection. Instead of being plunged into the lowest abyss of hell, I am now given to under-

stand that if I repent sincerely of my sins, I may be happy for ever in heaven. Instead of becoming the sport and prey of devils, by this Confession, if properly made, I claim heirship to those joys of Thy saints and angels, in the life to come.

O SOURCE of all true light, I beseech Thee by Thy grace enlighten this mind so darkened with human passion, and so corrupt with its habitual disorders, that unless Thou assist me with Thy grace, I cannot possibly discover my own depraved and wayward inclinations. Inspire me, I beseech Thee, with the greatest hatred for my sins, that from this time forward I may loathe and repel them. I shall dread nothing so much as to fall into those hideous abysses of destruction, and I shall endeavour to avoid all snares of the devil, from which I am now about to extricate myself, with Thy Divine assistance.

GRANT, O my God, that I may not be guilty of any blind partiality whilst unfolding the state of my con-

science, as I am now about to accuse myself to my director. Through a desire of palliating my offences, let me not introduce any doubtful words or phrases, which would render my Confession obscure. In all things I desire to make myself sufficiently understood by my Confessor, that he may thereby better discover my real guilt, and apply the proper remedies for my soul.

MY Lord, I will not cease to move Thy clemency, and until the last hour of my life, I shall never fail to call out for Thy compassion. "Have mercy on me, O Lord, the Son of David!" (Matt. xv. 22.) "Lord, help me!" (25.) "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mark x. 47.) Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight no man living can be justified, unless Thou regard him with an eye of compassion and forgiveness.

INSTRUCTIONS TO BE OBSERVED AT CONFESSION.

When your confessor turns to hear your Confession, with deep humility and sorrow for past sins, reverently bend your head, making a sign of the cross on yourself, and say, "Bless me, O Father, for I have sinned!" Afterwards, repeat the General Confession or Confiteor. In Latin it runs as follows: "Confiteor Deo omnipotenti, beatæ Mariæ semper Virgini, beato Michaeli Archangelo, beato Joanni Baptistæ, sanctis apostolis Petro et Paulo, omnibus sanctis, et tibi, Pater, quia peccavi nimis cogitatione, verbo et opere, (here strike your breast most penitently, and say,) mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa."* Or, otherwise you may thus say it in English: "I confess to Almighty God, to the Blessed Mary ever

^{*} It is here to be observed, that some persons say the whole of the Confiteor before their Confession; but the form already given is indeed a much better and more generally observed practice. By breaking off at mea maxima culpa, or at, through my exceeding great fault, you can resume after Confession, with Ideo precor, or with Therefore I beseek the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, until the Confiteor be concluded, either in Latin or English.

Virgin, to blessed St. Michael the Archangel, to blessed St. John the Baptist, to the holy apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and to all the saints, and to you, Father, that I have grievously sinned in thought, word, and deed, (strike your breast, saying, as before,) through my fault, through my fault, through my exceeding great fault." Next tell exactly what length of time has elapsed since you have been last at Confession; whether you have then received absolution or not; say if you have been to Holy Communion; if you performed the penance imposed on you by your confessor, or neglected it for any considerable time. Then proceed to accuse yourself of your sins; observing these following directions.

1. Do not make those negative and indefinite accusations, which many uninstructed persons repeat, such as "I have
not loved God as well as I ought;" "I
have not prayed with so great devotion as
I should;" "I have not cherished my
neighbour as I ought to have done;" "I
have not received the Sacraments with so
great a reverence as I might." For in

such accusation there is no criterion by which your confessor may understand the true state of your conscience; since all men upon earth, whether exceedingly wicked or tolerably perfect, may or must own to the same defects.

2. Rather state with exactness those actions wherein you preferred your own will before that of God, or your own convenience before the relief of your neighbour. Take care also to distinguish between those occasional and lesser imperfections that attend all human actions, and a continuous habit of doing amiss, by a wilful and grave offence, or by a considerable neglect of duty.

3. If you find your conscience troubled with any great sin, not set down in tables already given, and which occurs under unusual circumstances, you should confess it in like manner with the rest. If doubtful regarding its nature, ask your director to solve any difficulty for you.

4. For the sake of order and exact recollection, it would be better to begin regularly with all sins committed against the first commandment, and go on with the second, third, &c. Because by not

observing some such form or order, it is most likely that several of those sins which you have had in remembrance before entering the confessional may there escape your recollection. This method is especially desirable in making a general confession.

5. Be not confused or in trepidation, as too many are, when the confessor is about to hear their confession; for you are liable to forget many of your sins, or fail to confess them properly, owing to this state of nervousness or mental

anxiety.

6. It is proper that the penitent should think seriously and to some set purpose upon measures he must take for an entire amendment of life during the time to come. He should consider well what have been the proximate occasions of his sins; what circumstances, persons, or places are apt to prove dangerous in his case; what precautions he must take against temptations for the future; what pious exercises he must daily practise; what prayers, meditations, spiritual reading, &c. should engage his attention; when, where, and how he must endeavour

frequently to receive the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist, after a worthy approach to that of Penance. When the penitent finds himself heartily sorry for having offended God, and fully determined for the time to come to amend his life, to avoid all mortal sins, and the immediate occasions of them, with all wilful affection for venial sin, he may then proceed with an accusation somewhat after this form:

"I have entertained, I fear, more affection, particular friendship, or regard, for a certain person, or owing to certain bad motives, than would be consistent with my love and duty towards God:" state whether this be manifested occasionally or habitually; when and where, if in the church or in some public place, if with great danger of giving scandal, if in company with persons of a different religion from your own-in which case this scandal is of course increased—if before equals, inferiors, superiors, or those of a different sex or devoted to a religious life, you may have given occasion to the commission of sin in others, what injury you have done, whether this manifestation or action of yours was thoughtlessly committed, or through a corrupt and deliberate intention. Thus continue such accusation, until you have confessed all your sins, with their attendant circumstances, that increase or diminish their enormity in the sight of God. Towards the close of Confession, renew your most perfect sorrow of mind for having offended God, and say: "For these, and all other sins committed by me, which I cannot at present recollect, I am most heartily sorry and purpose amendment, asking pardon of God, with penance, and absolution from you, my ghostly father."

AFTER CONFESSION.

When you have confessed all the sins you can remember, try to dismiss every other thought from your mind, and only listen with docility and great attention to your Confessor, while he endeavours to excite you to contrition, or prescribes the various remedies or special means, which may enable you to atone for those sins, or to prevent future relapses. If he find

you properly disposed to receive absolution, he will give you notice he is about to absolve you. Whilst he is pronouncing this sentence of mercy in your regard, bow down in the most respectful manner, and with great fervour and earnestness renew your sorrow.

N.B.—The priest will here prescribe to you what prayers or other good works you must perform for your penance. He will also be careful to define how often you must repeat the devotions or practices imposed as a penance. He will likewise tell you if you shall receive. After confessing all your sins, and whilst being absolved, humbly make an act of perfect contrition, as follows:

"I am most heartily sorry, O my God, for having offended Thee; I detest my sins most sincerely, from the very bottom of my heart, because they are displeasing to Thee; and I firmly purpose, with Thy holy grace, never more to offend Thee, but hereafter to satisfy for my sins, and truly to amend my life."

Then resume the Confiteor where you

left off, saying:

"Ideo precor beatam Mariam semper

Virginem, beatum Michaelem Archangelum, beatum Joannem Baptistam, Sanctos apostolos Petrum et Paulum, omnes sanctos, et te, Pater, orare pro me ad Dominum Deum nostrum." Or thus in English: "Therefore I beseech the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Blessed Michael the Archangel, the Blessed St. John the Baptist, the holy Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and all the saints in heaven, to pray to the Lord our God for me."

Prayers after receiving Absolution.

MOST merciful God, as at the voice of Thy angel, his chains fell from the feet of St. Peter, and immediately he was restored to liberty; so grant, dearest Lord, that through the form of Absolution in this Holy Sacrament, pronounced by the priest, my soul may be released from sin, and all my past offences may be pardoned. Amen.

Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. O my God, be merciful to me a sinner. Thou who sufferedst for me, have mercy on me. Through the merits of Thy passion and sacred blood, O Lord, I shall be made whiter than snow, provided I am truly sorry for my sins, and never more offend Thee. Grant me this grace, O sweet Jesus. Amen.

Should it be at an early hour of the day, and that you have afterwards an opportunity of receiving at mass, endeavour to approach Holy Communion; if otherwise circumstanced, you can receive on the following day, or with as little delay as possible. And here you must take heed, that in the interval between Absolution and the time when you receive Holy Communion, no mortal sin should be committed by a penitent. You are bound to confess again and be absolved, before you approach the Lord's Table, in such case. Take the first opportunity to approach the sacred tribunal, before you receive Holy Communion, when reasonable doubts of being in a state of grace are presented to your mind.

But if your Confessor be under the necessity of refusing absolution, which may happen when you appear habitually addicted to the commission of any mortal sins; when you refuse to repair the in-

juries you have done to your neighbour in his person, property, or character; when you continue unfaithful to certain duties of obligation; when you are ignorant of the principal mysteries of religion; when you have slothfully neglected to examine your conscience; when you appear to have no real sorrow for your sins; and in many other cases for your own spiritual welfare, you must not repine nor feel displeased. Recollect that your Confessor is only the minister of Jesus Confessor is only the minister of Jesus Christ, to whom he must rigorously answer for his conduct in this tribunal. Through a criminal complaisance, or motives of mere human respect, wer he to absolve you, any of the above circumstances intervening, he would be a partaker in your guilt. He must, in a great degree, be the cause of your still continuing in crime whilst God and the continuing in crime and the continuing in crime whilst God and the continuing in crime and the co ing in crime, whilst God, without doubt, would require your soul at his hands. It is often expedient to withhold absolution, in order to humble a penitent, to excite him to greater diligence, or to obtain some other spiritual advantage. It is therefore highly improper to repine at such delays, to argue, to fret, or, above all, assign to others the cause or reason for deferring absolution. A Christian who means well. and who wishes to fulfil his duty, will never act so unreasonably: he will humbly submit when the priest is not evidently mistaken, and even in that case, he should remonstrate with diffidence and respect, meekly advancing reasons for his case or opinions. If he cannot convince his Confessor, a penitent should quietly withdraw from the tribunal; he can afterwards address himself to some other director, who has power to absolve him. If necessary, he may have recourse to some prudent and learned Theologian, or to his Bishop, whose greater experience, information, or authority, must afford a solution of this doubt under which the penitent labours.

when the priest turns to the next person after absolving you, leave the confessional without delay, and recite the following prayers before retiring from the church:

A Prayer to be said after Confession, when we have left the Confessional.*

OOD, gracious, and merciful Lord! can it be possible, that when only a few minutes before I entered this confessional, I was in Thy sight a most wicked culprit, and a vile sinful wretch; this sentence of mercy, pronounced by Thy minister in the holy tribunal, has restored me once more to Thy favour and friendship? Long as I am influenced by Thy divine grace, I shall retain Thy love, but no longer. O my God, grant me this earnest desire of my heart, to love Thee according to the utmost of my weak ability, for it is impossible for me to love Thee as Thon hast deserved. Grant that I may serve, fear, and obey Thee in all things; that I may prefer Thy will and interest before mine own; that I may seek, in all future pursuits and actions, what is most pleasing to Thee, and only promote



^{*} This prayer is to be said only when Absolution has been given, as may be understood from the allusions contained therein to a state of entire reconciliation with a God of mercy and forgiveness.

what shall redound to Thy greater glory; that I may resist all those temptations by the assistance of Thy grace, which my spiritual enemy, the devil, can place before me. With Thy gracious aid, I shall overcome all future obstacles to my eternal salvation. I am now leaving Thy tribunal, firmly resolved to suffer every privation and extremity in this life, rather than to offend God. O my dearest Lord, grant me Thy gracious assistance and protection. Strengthen, by Thy grace, these my resolutions, which I have now taken, and may I never again fall under the slavery of sin, and of my own evil passions. Amen.

A Prayer to be said after Confession, when Absolution has been deferred.

MY Lord God, I humbly acknowledge my unworthiness in Thy sight, and submit most willingly to the decision of Thy minister. But henceforth I renounce all communication with the devil; and whilst beginning a new life, I must endeavour in the bitterness of my soul to bewail those sins which now interpose between me and the grace of sacramental

absolution. But, O my Divine Jesus, absolution. But, O my Divine Jesus, grant that such a favour shall not long be deferred. I will endeavour to dispose myself for pardon, by that fidelity and earnestness with which I may be prepared for a full reception of priestly absolution, having made something like adequate atonement for my past crimes. From this moment, I shall more diligently scrutinize the recesses of my conscience; I shall avoid all occasions of sin; I shall make amends for my past offences; and I shall excite greater sorrow for having offended Thee. How sad is my remembrance of the past; especially as I must yet await Thy favourable regards, with trembling and in suspense! Yet, O my dread Lord, do not abandon me, even during this my time of probation; but look with eyes of mercy and protection on Thy unhappy prodigal. Whilst waiting for the full pardon of my past offences, grant that I may prove a sincere penitent, renounce sin, and earn for myself, through Thy Divine Grace, pity, forgiveness, and final perseverance, with admission to the joys of eternal life. Amen.

Prayers after Confession.

I SINCERELY detest all my sins; I am firmly resolved, O Lord, never to offend Thee hereafter, I earnestly entreat Thee to confirm these good resolutions, to increase my fervour, to render repentance efficacious, that the change in my conduct may be visible to all my familiars, and that I may henceforth edify more than I have scandalized. Amen.

MOST sweet Lord Jesus Christ, vouchsafe graciously to remember all Thy holy purposes in my regard, from the beginning to this moment, but chiefly that loving desire of becoming Man for the world's redemption. Pardon me, through Thy merits, all my vain thoughts and evil imaginations, as also those bad inclinations and sinful desires I may have excited in others. Amen.

MOST pious Lord Jesus, I, a poor sinner, humbly remind Thee of all those sweet words of consolation, which have ever fallen from Thy sacred lips, or which other holy persons have uttered, or shall

hereafter pronounce to the glory of Thy divine name. I earnestly beseech Thee, through these amiable expressions, to forgive what I may have spoken offensively to Thee, or what others, through my means, may have sinfully uttered. Amen.

MOST amiable Jesus! look on all those good works Thou hast performed for our salvation, and be pleased now to pardon whatever evil actions I have committed against Thee. Mercifully direct all my thoughts, words, and actions, to Thy greater glory, and regulate them according to the model afforded in Thine own blessed life. Amen.

O JESUS Christ, Saviour of the world, who hast invited all sinners to return from their errors, kindly receiving, refreshing and consoling them when truly penitent, remember that with Thy precious blood Thou wert pleased to redeem me. To Thy sacred wounds I fly for refuge. As in Thy mercy, Thou didst pray for Thine enemies, and pour forth Thy sacred blood for Thy persecutors and rebellious children, so impart to my soul the merits of Thy

bitter passion. Grant that I may never again crucify Thee by my offences, but, sincerely grieving for what is passed, and resolutely striving against future temptations, may I fervently persevere in Thy service to the end of my life. Amen.

INTO Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my whole being. O Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

RECEIVE, O Lord, in Thy great mercy, the poor remains of my life. I am heartily sorry for the years I have misspent; they have vanished as a shadow; they have passed away without profit; but as I cannot recall them, suffer me at least to think of them in the bitterness of my soul. Do not permit me to yield any longer to my accustomed failings. Let the ardour, with which I pursued a life of sin, be henceforth more diligently employed in Thy service, that where sin hath abounded, Thy grace may still more abound. Remember, O Lord Jesus, that it is not Thy desire to lose any one of those, whom Thy Father hath given Thee, but rather to have mercy always, and to

spare. Thou wilt not seek to destroy any, but endeavour to save all; because Thy Father hath sent Thee upon earth, not so much to judge the world, as to release mankind from the slavery of sin. Therefore, O Lord, may Thy boundless merits plead for me now, and at my last moments, may I obtain the full remission of all my offences. May I truly know Thee; may I ever love Thee; may I tend towards Thee unceasingly; and, at length, may I obtain eternal fruition of Thy divine presence, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

Is it possible, O my God, that having been a criminal, but a short time since, I should now be cleansed from my sins, by virtue of this Holy Sacrament? Yes, I firmly believe it; because Thou hast left to Thy Church, the power of forgiving sins, and hast inclined my heart to comply with those conditions necessary for obtaining pardon. Thou hast declared to Thy apostles, that whatever they should loose on earth, should be loosed also in heaven; and that whatever sins they would forgive,

should also be pardoned by Thee. Here are the keys of Thy heavenly kingdom, solemnly consigned to the pastors of Thy Church, to open for us the gate to repentance. We are therefore obliged to have recourse to their ministry. This is the sacred warrant for those judgments pro-nounced in their tribunal, the authority of which the faithful have ever acknowledged. This jurisdiction was not confined to the apostles, no more than the power of baptizing nations; being granted, in general terms, it doth, in like manner, extend to the priesthood of Thy Church, as Thou hast intended. I give Thee thanks, O my God, for this tender proof of Thy love, and I invite all creatures to glorify Thee for it. Thou hast given a power to the priests of Thy Church, which Thou wouldst not confer on angels or archangels: "Whatever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed also in heaven;" was not addressed to these; "The princes of this world have dominion only over the body, but the power of the priest affects the very soul. The Eternal Father hath given all power to His Son;

but then I behold this very power delivered by the Son to mortals. The Jewish priests could only pronounce those clean, whose bodies had been already cleansed from leprosy; but to our priests it was given, not merely to pronounce clean, but really to cleanse, not the infections of the body, but the very stains of the soul." Such are the words of St. Chrysostom,* when treating on the priesthood. "Thus," says St. Leo, † "Thy manifold mercy hath provided succour for human frailty; that as by baptism, so also by penance, the hope of life should be renewed, for Jesus Christ, our Mediator, authorized the rulers of His Church to impose penance upon persons confessing, and to admit them thus purified, by wholesome satisfaction, to share in the sacraments." This is an effect of that precious blood which Thou, O amiable Redeemer, hast shed for my sake; I acknowledge the wonders of Thy love in accepting my poor efforts to offer Thee repentance, in pardoning all, in forgetting all, instead of punishing me as I much deserved. It is only a God of infinite

Book iii.

[†] Epistle xxiii.

goodness, who could deal in such a compassionate manner, with so miserable a sinner; and therefore I humbly beseech Thee, to imprint on my heart a just sense of this favour, that I may gratefully remember it all the days of my life, and extol, without ceasing, the multitude of Thy tender mercies. Amen.

I CONFESS my ingratitude, O my God, and seek refuge in Thy boundless compassion. I have wandered, like a sheep that is gone astray; but yet have pity on me, and save me. Forgive me for what is passed, and through Thy infinite goodness, grant me a true steadiness of purpose, that from this moment I may never offend Thee any more. Amen.

GOD of heaven and earth, grant that in all my future actions I may fear, love, and respect Thee, and thereby avoid offence to Thee. I trust I am now free from my former sins and imperfections; grant, O Lord, that I may continue to preserve this grace; I am restored to Thy love and favour, may I long remain Thy faithful servant. I now see clearly all the

sinfulness and vanity of my past life. It has been one continued course of disturbance, tumult, passion, and sinfulness. have done but little good; or, at the best, what good I may have done, has been indeed insignificant, compared with my many imperfections. What, O my Lord, have I been so perverse as to run headlong to my own destruction, without any sincere purpose of amendment? How have I been able to rest each night, whilst in this state of grievous sin, not knowing but the right arm of Thy just indignation might be raised against me, to strike me dead before the dawn of light on the ensuing day? What dreadful punishments hast Thou not awarded persons, even exemplary in their lives, and who were in great favour with God, for what might be judged venial transgressions? We read, that for a slight offence, Moses and Aaron were commanded by Almighty God not to lead the children of Israel into the promised "Because you did not believe Me. to sanctify Me before the children of Israel, you shall not lead these people into the land which I shall give unto them." (Num. xx. 12.) It is supposed that this crime

was only a doubt felt by Moses, as to whether or not, he could make water spring from the rock. For such reason the Lord said to him: "Thou shall not pass this Jordan." (Deut. iii. 27.) King David, for his vanity in numbering his people, had 70,000 of them swept away by pestilence. (2 Kings, xxiv. 15.) Oza seeing the holy ark incline too much to one side, endeavoured to support it with his hand, for which he was struck dead on the spot; because no persons, except the priests, were allowed to touch it. Yet Oza was not a simple layman, he being a Levite. (2 Kings, vi. 7.) Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt, for looking back upon Sodom when it was in flames. (Gen. xix. 26.) Because King Ezechias showed his wealth and treasures to ambassadors of the Babylonian king, with some degree of vanity, the Prophet Isaiah was sent by God to warn him, that his riches, his nobles, and people, should be brought away into Babylon, and that his sons should become slaves to the king of that country. (4 Kings, xx. 17,—Isai. xxxix.) A certain holy prophet was sent by God to erase King Jeroboam's altar in

Samaria. He did so, and when the king stretched forth his hand to have him apprehended, it withered up, on which the prophet again restored it. After having executed his commission, and obeyed God's orders in all things, this prophet returned home, but he was deceived by a certain false prophet, with whom the man of God was prevailed upon to eat. For this slight transgression, however, he was killed by a lion on the road, yet the lion afterwards stood by and guarded the prophet's body. (3 Kings, xiii.) Ananias and Saphira, for fraudulently concealing a part of the money for which their lands were sold, and for telling a lie, fell dead before the feet of St. Peter. For telling this falsehood, not to men, but to God, the young men who buried Ananias, came in about three hours after, and carried his wife Saphira to the grave. (Acts, v. 1-10.) Thus we find, how the Almighty God hath visibly punished several persons, in the most severe manner, for wilful venial transgressions; yet, I have been preserved, although daily committing so many grievous sins. A time for repentance was allotted me, yet I thought this but a slight

indulgence. What if I had been taken away in the midst of mortal sin? should undergo then all the justice and rigour of God's dreadful judgments. The jaws of hell would be opened wide to receive me; the devils would be in readiness to seize upon me; the groans and execrations of damned souls would assail mine ears; the hideous darkness, and the flames, only sufficiently lurid to throw a gloomy light over this frightful place, would be presented to mine eyes; the noisome and insupportable stench of sulphur, brimstone, and other offensive materials, must intolerably affect the sense of smelling. But what are all these inconveniencies, to the pain and torment both soul and body must feel, when racked with the most dreadful, unspeakable anguish and misery? The flames that shall never be extinguished, and the worm that will never die, must be continually preying on the hapless body; every instrument of torture the ingenuity or malice of devils can invent, will be employed against it; every particular vice shall have its proper punishment. Even the very soul shall be torn in pieces by conflicting passions. With an exercise of memory, it will recollect, in the greatest anguish, those poor and trifling joys of this world, which it has left; the fast-fading and worthless baubles, which has brought it to its present dreadful situation, the smiles and flatteries of companions, perhaps now fellow sufferers, who contributed to excite and encourage in the pursuit of pitiful and contemptible pleasures, with the little respect or regard it had, when on this earth, for those who would have guided it onwards in the paths of virtue and of good works. All these, and a thousand other like reflections, will sink the suffering soul in the utmost extremity of sorrow and despair—the pains and miseries the body must undergo, will become aggravated by this tormenting remorse of mind. Alas! what hardened person, now on earth, can refuse to be moved with apprehension and stirred to repentance, when he seriously reflects on the bare possibility of undergoing these most excruciating torments? Where is the obstinate sinner who would fail, not for an endless eternity, but even for one day, to avoid them? If a damned soul were

snatched from the flames of hell, required to begin and lead a new life, or if found committing any more sins, the rescued sinner should be punished at the end of life, in hell, for the duration of a single hour, his term of life would then become a model for all the saints that are now crowned with glory in the highest heavens. What anchorite could be found leading a more austere or penitential life, than this reprieved soul? Would not such an imaginary person suffer all privations and miseries that human nature could possibly endure, if by all this punishment he could avoid one hour's punishment in hell? O. hell! thou place of torments! O, endless and miserable eternity! O, prison of the damned! Who can form a proper idea of thy dreadful and relentless tortures? What punishment, capable of being visited by the most cruel and wicked tyrants, on their fellow creatures here on earth, can ever be compared to the fire of hell? Where are the instruments of torture, that could inflict suffering intolerable in degree and endless in duration? Alas! it is impossible that any torments could compare with those

of hell, in point of duration; but it is equally impossible, that any torture could be rendered so agonizing during the actual or an equal time of infliction. Let me now reflect, and ask myself, whether it be deserving my attention to avoid all this dreadful and eternal punishment. I hope I shall not again rush into danger, as I have been pardoned my past crimes and imperfections; and what difficulty can there be in continuing to preserve the grace of reconciliation until the hour of my death? It is not only easy for me to persevere, but it will become a pleasure, if I faithfully endeavour to obey, love, and serve God, as He requires. What a consolation for me, if I can exclaim at the hour of my death, as I now hope, I may safely say: My God, receive Thy recovered sheep on Thy shoulders, and prepare for a prodigal child Thy fatted calf, declaring to Thy servants: "Because, this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found." (Luke, xv. 24.) Receive me now into Thy house, to Thy favour and protection; I am Thy own henceforth; grant that for all eternity I may continue faithful. Let Thine angels prepare the way for me to endless happiness, that I may speedily rejoice with Thee, and inherit bliss, which neither human eye hath seen, ear hath heard, nor hath it entered man's heart to conceive. Amen.

GRACIOUS God, from this hour number me amongst Thine own; I have long wandered in the darkness of sin, but I now hope to follow the light of truth. Alas! I had been blind to mine own interests for a long time; but now let me open mine eyes to the brightness of eternal glory. From this moment let me cease to pursue false guides in the traces of sin; let me follow in the footsteps of my gracious Saviour. Let me disburthen myself of my iniquities, which have heavily pressed upon me, and take up the yoke of Thy cross, which is both sweet and light; let me seek for the joys of a happy eter-nity, and avoid the punishments and despair of the damned. Let me be fortified with the practice of penance and mor-tification, and thus overcome the devil, my spiritual enemy. I have been a rebel to Thee, my dearest Lord, I have strayed

from Thee, and drawn others away from Thee by my bad example. But now by contrary virtues, I must endeavour to prove myself one of Thy most faithful soldiers; I will march under Thy leadership, fight under Thy banner, repose in Thy camp, and undertake the most hazardous enterprises for Thy sake. How have I presumed to revolt from a mighty and absolute monarch who has power to punish me with death at any moment He pleases? Can I ever make sufficient reparation for my grievous sins? Can I ever cease to sue for pardon from an offended God? I have proffered my services to an enemy, and I have become his slave; but I hope no longer to continue the bondman of my adversary. My chains have been broken, and my fetters have been removed; I have had experience of that dismal and fetid dungeon, in which I had been so long confined, and shall I once more allow myself to pine in captivity? All kinds of physical slavery are most commonly abhorred by men; yet we are so foolish as usually to prefer the chains of Satan, the very worst kind of slavery that can be imagined, to the freedom of a guiltless con-

science. I have now returned to a sense of my duty, and am resolved to enlist amongst the band of Thy elect, and contend as their fellow-soldier in the struggle. Strengthen this resolution, O my God, and with the assistance of Thy holy grace. I will continue to serve and to love Thee for the remainder of my life. I will continue henceforth an example of fidelity to edify the rest of my fellow creatures. I wish to return to Thee, and be a loyal subject once more, although I have revolted from Thy service. How faithless must I have been to desert from the standard of my Lord and Master, who has been so good and so merciful to me; and what infatuation must have possessed my mind, to have once ranged myself amongst the ranks of Thy enemies and my own! What delight could I enjoy in the pursuit of pleasures, that I should rush headlong to destruction, in spite of all the persuasions that Thou couldst urge to dissuade me? And what could I find repulsive in the idea of heaven, that I should turn my face from it to avoid Thy divine presence? Alas! most wretched creature, a prey to such strange infatua-

tion! Could I have been so foolish, so thoughtless, or so blind, as not to know that I was hastening onwards to end my days, but only to plunge myself into the flames of hell, and to exclude myself from the delights of heaven? Ah, my dearest Saviour, I now understand how sweet are Thy invitations and rewards! I have returned to Thee-let me be numbered amongst Thy elect. I now feel within me a degree of happy composure, that I am one of Thy own children; truly I have been a disobedient son, but I have once more returned to my loving Father. Receive, O my best of parents, Thy prodigal child, who will continue, I now firmly resolve on it, faithful for ever and ever, to Thy laws and precepts. Amen.

ACTS AFTER CONFESSION.

An Act of Resignation.

From this moment to the hour of your death, resign yourself to the will of God, and beg of Him to dispose of you in any way which He shall be pleased to ordain. Resolve to accept life, death, health, or sickness, with a composed mind, and according as He desires to award

 them. Offer yourself, your talents, your property, and all other things you possess in this world, for safe keeping to His Almighty disposal.

SECT. I.

AM Thine, O my God, do with me as Thou pleasest; I resign myself into Thine hands, deal with Thy restored child as Thou deemest most advisable. pose to remain Thine henceforth, and for ever; I join myself to Thy chosen band of followers; I league myself with Thee as Thy faithful retainer. Grant that no allurements, which the enemy may offer, may ever induce me to depart henceforward from Thy service, and that I may never seek for the flesh-pots of Egypt, or leave this heavenly manna. Grant that I may be always better instructed in my duty, than to become a traitor to my Lord, or transfer my allegiance to the devil; and that I may never be so unfortunate, as to submit to the galling fetters of my most inveterate enemy. I am Thy faithful soldier, from this moment, until the latest period of my existence. Death itself cannot part me from Thee; but it shall rather join me indissolubly to Thee.

When I have conquered in this great struggle, in which I shall be continually engaged during my mortal career, I can then look with confidence on heaven, and thus exclaim: "Hail thou everlasting abode of the just! Hail delightful realms! How have I been so happy as to possess such delights! Gracious Lord, I do not deserve the least of Thy favours; had I but known that the smallest portion of those joys awaited me, whilst I lived on earth, no bounds should be set to my thanksgivings! No anchorite should exceed me, in practising the works of penance and mortification, and no religious should equal my assiduous communings with Thee in prayer and meditation! I have contended with my adversary for a place in these glorious realms; yet the possession of them now amply compensates me, for all the trouble I have had in achieving this victory! What a pleasure to be in company with the angels, the archangels, the cherubim, the seraphim, the white-robed martyrs, the confessors, the apostles, the evangelists, the elders, the chaste virgins, the holy innocents, and all those other saints, who are eternally

triumphant in heaven, after their long sufferings and trials on earth! Yes, dearest Lord, what pleasure can equal this? Not all the joys, that earth can afford, would be able to bear comparison with one single moment's enjoyment of Thy divine presence. All the pleasures, which imagination can conceive, would be poor indeed, compared with the delights of Thy heavenly kingdom!"

SECT. II.

And yet, how easy it is to obtain these endless joys! When I resign myself into Thy hands for eternity, it becomes a matter of indifference to me, whether I gain or lose in this world, whether I rejoice or mourn, whether I be poor or rich, whether I live or die. Whatsoever Thou art pleased to send shall be most acceptable to me. I have daily said, in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done." Yet I have oftentimes murmured, when any thing went contrary to my inclinations. But now, O my good Jesus, I can repeat this petition in a prayer, common to all Christians, and which Thou hast

composed. (Matt. vi. 9-13.) I can recite it with calm and perfect resignation. Health, sickness, wealth, property, life and death, so far as I am concerned, are in Thy hands; dispose of them as Thou desirest. I declare myself, from this moment, to be entirely subject to Thy rule, and as a just Monarch, treat Thy disobedient rebel in whatsoever manner Thou mayest judge most appropriate, only spare my sinful soul. I well know that I deserve the most rigorous punishments that imagination can conceive; for not once alone have I rebelled against Thee, but I have revolted several times, even after experiencing Thy great clemency. Under a temporal prince, if his subject dared to rebel only once, this crime would be deemed sufficiently great for expiation with no punishment less severe than death; yet as slave of the eternal King, armed too with the rigours of divine justice, if I revolt from Him several times, but return after each act of disobedience and rebellion, with a resolution of amendment, I am received again into my Sovereign's favour, as an indulgent father would receive a child that was

lost to him, and not as an indignant po-tentate would punish an unworthy liege. Gracious Lord, receive now from me all that I possess, or can hope for; they are surrendered into Thy hands; they are Thine for ever. I recommend to Thy gracious protection my soul and body.
(Here according to circumstances, offer to God's protection your father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, friends, relations, as Christian charity and the Communion of Saints in the Church suggest.) My means, my property, my talents, my services, my faculties, my hopes and comforts in this life, I now transmit into Thy Almighty hands. Take them all from me, when and as Thou art pleased; they are of little advantage to me, in comparison with that peace of mind I feel, now happily reconciled to Thee.

SECT. III.

Oh, had other wicked sinners but known that tranquillity of soul I now possess, how soon would they not become reconciled to the Almighty! How soon would they not forsake the devil, together

with their own evil ways, and return to God! They would wonder at their own perversity and insensibility, in not having forsaken their follies and errors; they would weep tears of bitterness over their misspent lives; they would hasten immediately to the salutary fountains of penance, and quench their thirst in the living stream; they would become examples of virtue to their wicked associates, and instruments in the hands of God. perhaps, for reclaiming these confederates. from the evil tenor of their thoughts, words, and works. Grant, O Lord, that I may henceforth become a model for imitation by the good, that I may reign Thy favourite, through fidelity to Thy sacred law, and that I may be instrumental in converting many unhappy sinners from their wickedness and implety. Sustained by Thy gracious assistance, the devil shall be discomfited in all his persevering attempts to seduce and betray me. In fine, grant that I may rejoice for all eternity, in company with Thy angels and saints, in the kingdom of Thy glory. \mathbf{Amen}_{-}

An Act of Thanksgiving.

Rejoice in your heart that your sins are forgiven; return God thanks for this wonderful condescension. Pour forth the most grateful expressions and feelings from your soul, to thank Him for His goodness and say, in the following words:

SECT. I.

CLORY, praise, and honour, be for ever due to my Lord Jesus Christ! What tongue can celebrate the height, breadth and depth of love He bears us? He has pardoned a designing, an avowed, an insidious, an open and a treacherous rebel. He has forgiven me, although I have raised the standard of revolt against His Divine authority. He has overlooked all my former offences, on condition of my returning again to my duty. O my dearest Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, accept my most unfeigned thanks. I can never sufficiently acknowledge Thy goodness for those innumerable benefits Thou hast so freely bestowed on me. With the assistance of Thy holy grace I am now freed from sin, and what benefit could be conferred on me greater than this? What

favour can be more grateful for my acceptance? And what bounty of Thine can exceed this pure gift of Thy goodness? An ungrateful prodigal son received into his home by an offended yet loving Father! A sinful and an unfaithful wretch pardoned all his crimes and misdemeanours! A disorderly and rebellious subject forgiven by an indulgent and a most clement monarch! My sins removed, my offences forgiven, my crimes no longer remembered to my prejudice! Can it be possible? Yes, O my God, I firmly believe it; I know that through a sentence of mercy pronounced in Thy name by the priest, my transgressions are pardoned when I have had sincere sorrow for them. As Thy minister and my judge, my director sat on the awful tribunal, having power to pronounce a judgment which would either loose or bind the sins of those who approach. I did not deserve Thy pardon; yet I am freely forgiven.

SECT. II.

O my Divine Redeemer! O bountiful Saviour! O Incarnate Word! O Thou

who wert begotten of the Father before all ages! I pour forth to Thee these exclamations, as the expressions of my heart, rather than of my tongue. Where can I find words sufficient to thank Thee for Thy innumerable benefits? Alas, were I fervid in eloquence as Thy great apostle St. Paul, that vessel of election, still I would fall infinitely short in finding suitable expressions to proclaim Thy bounties to me. But Thou knowest the joy that now pervades my breast; Thou seest into the most hidden recesses of my heart; Thou knowest the most secret and intricate mysteries of the human soul. Thou canst judge whether or not this joy is feigned, whether I now say more than I feel, whether or not my thanks are freely offered to Thee. What gratitude can I return for Thy favours? What praise can I give Thee for Thy adorable perfections? What love can I bear Thee for what Thou hast given? None: at least nothing at all commensurate with Thy goodness, Thy greatness, or Thy bounties. I make to Thee this single offering—certainly a very poor one—take my heart, and let it melt in the ocean of Divine love. I have

nothing else for Thee; but I know Thou wilt be content even with such an offering. Keep it attached to Thee, therefore, through every future vicissitude, and grant that no artifice of the devil, no temptations of the flesh, nor seductions of this world, may induce it again, to become estranged from Thy service. Grant that it may securely rest upon the promises of its Saviour, and be open henceforth only to the influences of Divine Grace. Amen.

An Act of Fear.

Conceive a lively fear of those punishments which await the wicked, and resolve by all means to avoid them. Think on your present happiness, by comparing it with your former state. Think of the torments that are endured in hell by the danned; and then beg of God, that He would constantly revive such recollections in your mind, whenever you are tempted to sin.

SECT. I.

DUT, O my God, how great should not my gratitude be towards one so very merciful as to preserve me from those sufferings which many others, less criminal perhaps than I have been, now endure in the flames of hell! When I re-

flect on all my bad actions, I should have great reason to fear that my atonement is sufficient. I know, at least, that it can hardly be perfect as I would desire. Yet Attrition for my sins, however feebly it reveals my sorrow for past offences, justifies me in Thy sight, when duly combined with the other Sacramental parts of Confession and Satisfaction. If I have produced even this imperfect sorrow, I shall have no reason to regret my approach to this Sacrament. At least, I will not despair of God's friendship being once more secured. I firmly hope that I am now safe in this particular of my salvation; but yet I have reason to fear that the devil will continue to beset my way with temptations, to which I must undoubtedly yield, unless supported by Thy most effective graces. I know that his wrath is now very great and shall be directed against me; he sees that I am snatched away from his hands; that I am rescued from the fire of hell; that I have put my trust in God, and thereby disappointed his expectations. O my God, I tremble when I reflect on that dreadful dungeon to which he was about

to lead me. When I think on the burning flames, noxious exhalations, and feetid atmosphere, the curses, execrations and groans of the damned, my heart recoils in dismay. Baffle, O Lord, his dreadful intentions, and grant that whenever I am tempted to sin, I may always keep such wholesome terrors before my mind.

SECT. II.

Alas, what must have been my former sad state, until I broke those chains that bound me as a wretched culprit. I was fettered by my most dangerous foe, completely in his power, led on blindly to hell. before I considered seriously whither I was going, or what would have become of me, and without opening my eyes to examine my dreadful position. I am now, I trust, the favourite of Jesus, following the steps of my crucified Redeemer, carrying the sweet yoke of His cross, journeying onwards towards the heavenly Jerusalem, and in ardent expectation of those joys that reward the elect. Thanks, O my God, ten thousand thanks are justly due to Thee. Thou art the greatest of all

potentates, the prince of princes, and the holy of holies. When I call myself one of Thy elect just now, I say it with pro-found reverence, and yet with some degree of hesitation; for I wonder how a despicable, vile, and rebellious worm of this earth could so easily obtain pardon from so just, so great, and so outraged a God. Oh! let me endeavour with double diligence henceforth to merit Thy favour and protection. Let me strive to avoid those torments which the damned now endure in hell: those flames kindled to vindicate Thy justice; that brimstone representing the bad odour in which sinners remain the bad odour in which sinners remain contaminated and corrupt; those horrible groans, curses and blasphemies of condemned souls, shut up in that direful prison. Let the consideration of those images and horrors, O Lord, continually possess my mind: let me think on them without ceasing. Whenever I am tempted to act, let me exclaim: "I see what now thanks in my arranged let me the stands in my arranged let." stands in my way, and let me try whether by yielding consent, I will serve God or the devil. If the suggestion be good, God is undoubtedly its author; if it be bad, the devil must claim its paternity.

The pleasure to be derived from doing a bad action is slight and transitory, but the delight attendant on a good act is great and everlasting. If I yield to mortal sin, I deserve hell; if I overcome temptation I merit heaven. Away, therefore, thou treacherous tempter, I know that thy designs are for evil, nor are Thy thoughts employed about my welfare. It was God who created me, who formed me, who redeemed me. He has promised me, and His word cannot fail, that if I deserve heaven its portals will be opened to receive me. O Lord, my God, defeat the artifices of the devil, that common enemy of mankind, and conduct me to Thyself, the guide of just persons, and the treasure of salvation." Amen.

An Act of Praise.

Reflect on all the bounties of God to you, but especially on this favour, that by the Sacrament of Penance you are furnished with a remedy against sin. Praise and glorify His Almighty name, with all the powers and faculties of your mind, and with the most grateful feelings of your heart.

MY God, Thou art infinitely good, kind, and merciful; I am wicked,

headstrong, and inconsiderate. Thy goodness to me knows no bounds, and my iniquities are innumerable. I was created from nothing save the dust of the earth. I was baptized and brought up in the bosom of Thy One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I was rescued from infidelity, and the darkness of heresy. I was nurtured, supported, and furnished with everything necessary for my living on this earth. But why do I attempt to enumerate Thy benefits, when Thy very Apostles and Evangelists have proclaimed that the tongues of men and angels would fail in the endeavour? Of all Thy merfail in the endeavour? Of all Thy mercies to man, none can be greater than this remission of sins through the Sacrament of Penance. Instead of being a bondsman to Satan, I have become one of Thy glorious freedmen. In place of being a victim doomed to hell, I am entitled to a place in the kingdom of heaven. When I ought to be treated as an ungrateful and ungenerous rebel, I am restored to Thy favour and without any merit on my part. O my good God, shall I ever be insensible of such favours lavished on me? Shall I ever cease to glorify and me? Shall I ever cease to glorify and

extol Thee above all Thy creatures? Shall I not die with grief and shame when I reflect on the manner in which I have shamefully abandoned Thee? Oh, forget from this moment those many sins and imperfections of which I have been guilty! I know Thou delightest on all occasions to have mercy and to spare. I entreat Thee now to forgive all former offences, as well those I do not recollect as those I have confessed. Thou art liberal, good, and merciful, hear Thou my petition. Praise, glory, thanksgiving and adoration be offered to Thy holy name, for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, AND TO ALL THE SAINTS.

VIRGIN, immaculate Mother of God, and all you heavenly citizens, pray to the Lord, that my Confession be acceptable in His sight. I have most grievously offended Almighty God in divers ways. I have been a most wicked and sinful wretch. I was bound, en-

snared, and chained by Satan. But I now hope to advance in the paths of virtue, and to resist steadily his evil inspirations. Beg of God that He may strengthen this my resolution.

OH all you Angels and Archangels, all you Patriarchs and Prophets, all you Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, Confessors and Holy Virgins, I implore the assistance of your prayers. St. Peter and St. Paul, St. John and St. James, St. Joseph, glorious spouse of the Blessed Virgin, and you illustrious patron of this nation and diocese, help me by your intercession. O that I may never be so unhappy as to fall into mortal sin! I would willingly die ten thousand deaths, rather than offend God mortally. I know the filth and enormity of sin, and that peace of mind I must enjoy when in favour with Almighty God. O when will that happy day arrive when I shall behold my Lord face to face? When will the hour approach that in company with all the heavenly choir, I shall unceasingly sing Thy praises? Oh how delighted shall I be to serve, to love and obey Thee without further danger of a relapse. Grant this favour, dearest Lord, it is all I now desire. May that glorious consummation soon take place when I shall taste the delights of heaven, when I shall be entirely released from those chains that bind me to this earth, and when I shall rejoice in that liberty secured only to Thy faithful servants. Amen.

HOLY Virgin Mary, and all you saints and angels, bless and extol our Lord for His infinite mercies; beg of Him to accept with condescension this my humble confession; to supply through His goodness all its deficiencies; and graciously to confirm in heaven that sentence of absolution which hath been here pronounced upon me, by God's minister and my director. Amen.

MOST Blessed Lady, Saints, and Angels of Heaven, unite all your prayers and intercede for me with our Lord Jesus Christ, as He has redeemed me from the chains of Satan by the price of His most Sacred Blood and by my own repentance, that He would never again suffer

me to fall into mortal sin, or forfeit all the advantages He has procured by His own sufferings and death on Calvary. Amen.

A Prayer to our special Patron, and to that Saint who is chief Patron of our nation and diocese.

HAPPY Saint N. N. (mention him or I her whose name you bear in Baptism or Confirmation or whoever is your selected patron) graciously deign to assist me by thy powerful intercession. Help me through thy holy prayers to overcome all temptations and deceitful artifices of the devil. Grant that by thy patronage, I may advance more eagerly in the pursuit of true knowledge, loving and serving my Creator in all and above all thingsavoiding sin, or any temptation that might lead to the commission of it. Beseech the Lord our God in my behalf that He would overlook whatsoever faults I may have committed in making this Confession. And thou blessed patron of this nation and diocese, N. N. (whatever country and diocese you live in, name the chief patrons there venerated,) whom the Church hath appointed to be specially honoured by thy faithful clients, protect and assist me, one of its inhabitants, through your merits and intercession, in common with all the rest of my countrymen, who cherish a particular devotion towards you. I will endeavour henceforth to imitate those virtues which have distinguished you so conspicuously on earth, and which obtained for you such a glorious destiny. May I hereafter rejoice with you for all eternity in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

A Prayer to our Guardian Angel.

GUARDIAN Angel, to whose charge God hath committed me in His infinite mercy, watch carefully over me and defend me from all temptations and allurements of Satan. Grant that through Thy intercession I may now advance more steadily in the paths of virtue, secured under thy guidance. May I, directed by thy vigilant protection, recur more frequently to this saving Sacrament of Penance, and thereby wash my soul still more

from all its stains and imperfections. Amen.

Aspirations after Confession.

O MY God, may I never commit any future transgression.

Give me grace hereafter to continue in

Thy favour.

Grant that this absolution, given by the priest, may be ratified by Thee in heaven.

O Lord, do not permit Thy recovered sheep ever more to stray from Thee. Keep it within Thy fold, and let not the wolf approach.

Secure it from all artifices of the

enemy.

Forsake me not, O Lord my God: depart not Thou from me. (Ps. xxxvii. 22.)

ON INDULGENCES.

No point of doctrine in the Catholic Church is more misrepresented than that of Indulgences. Those of a different persuasion often assert, that by Indulgences Catholics mean a power left them by pastors of the Church to commit sin, or a pardon to be obtained on easy terms for the commission of sin. The falsehood of these assertions is quite obvious to Catholics, if not understood by their maligners. It may be well, however, to furnish a few observations in reference to Church doctrine on this matter.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has left the power of imparting Indulgences to the Apostles and to their successors; for this is included in the faculty binding or loosing from sin. The Church has an inexhaustible treasury, made up from the infinite merits of Christ. and the exalted virtues of His saints. From this treasury are drawn Indulgences, which remit temporal punishments, that penitents should otherwise endure, as an expiation for their past offences. By priestly absolution the pardon of sin is obtained; but Indulgences release a penitent from those temporal punishments which are commuted for eternal torments, owing to the efficacy of Penance.

Indulgences only remit the whole or a part of the temporal punishment due to

our sins, after the eternal punishment has been remitted. They do not release us from sin itself. It is necessary for him who obtains an Indulgence, to be in the state of grace, to be sorry for his sins, and to perform certain prescribed conditions. These are usually the making of a good confession and communion, with the recitation of some prayers, or the performance of certain good works required.

The Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Creed, or the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, are useful prayers to be recited. It is also recommended to pray for the exaltation and extension of the Catholic Church; for the conversion of sinners; for peace and good will amongst principalities and powers; and for the extirpation of schism, heresy, and infidelity.

The Apostle St. Paul exercised this power in case of the incestuous Corinthian, whom he had before put under penance. (2 Cor. ii.) This faculty of forgiveness is not intended to encourage the slothfulness of penitents, but rather to excite their own exertions, that thus

they may procure all necessary aids to obtain temporal and eternal spiritual rewards, whilst endeavouring to bring forth worthy fruits of penance by atoning for past offences. Those persons only obtain Indulgences, who, being free from mortal sin, perform all those works prescribed by him imparting them. The exercise of this power has been regulated by the Church, according to various adjuncts of time, persons and circumstances, for the performance of certain pious works, and to promote hely objects. to promote holy objects.

Indulgences are applicable to the living, by their receiving absolution from sin, and to the dead by way of suffrage. The Council of Trent provided that these heavenly treasures of the Church should heavenly treasures of the Church should be freely but prudently extended to the faithful, that all these might understand, they are granted not for mercenary motives, but to encourage piety. Where-fore collectors of alms, for the purpose of building or founding churches, or for other charitable objects, are prevented from giving Indulgences, in return for such benefactions, to avoid all possible abuses arising from this or any similar source.*

Indulgences are either plenary or partial. Plenary Indulgences remit in full the whole weight of temporal punishment. The Sovereign Pontiffs, as presiding over the Universal Church, have reserved to themselves the power of granting Plenary Indulgences. Wherefore the Pope exercises this privilege; but other bishops can only grant Partial Indulgences, as for instance, at the dedication of a Church, these are empowered to give an Indulgence for one year, and at other times for forty days. Sometimes the Holy Father forty days. Sometimes the Holy Father allows Vicars Apostolic to impart Plenary Indulgences, as also Cardinal Legates de latere, and other bishops by delegation. By an extraordinary and delegated privilege, Indulgences likewise may be imparted by priests, or even by clerics of a lesser ecclesiastical grade. Partial Indulgences, granted for so many days, or perhaps for so many years, release the penitent from that portion of the debt or temporal punishment, formerly enjoined

^{*} See Sess. xxi. cap. ix. De Ref. and Sess. xxv. Decr. de Indulg.

by the canons, as an atonement for certain sins. Those days or octaves, within which Plenary Indulgences may be obtained, are usually announced by the priest to his flock, on occasions of public service.

A PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE EFFECTS OF A PLENARY INDULGENCE.

I OFFER Thee, O my God, in the name of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, this communion which I am going to make, for Thy greater glory, in thanksgiving for Thy benefits, to obtain pardon of my sins, and grace to overcome that particular sin to which I am most subject. (Here vecur to it in thought.) Seeing that my obligations to Thee are immense, and obligations to Thee are immense, and that it is quite out of my power ever to discharge them, I have recourse to this indulgence, which the Church, authorized by Thee, extends to Thy unworthy servant. Grant me the dispositions which are necessary to obtain it. Let me now share in the infinite merits of Jesus Christ and it that insurance in the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, and in that incomparable ransom He has paid as the price for my salvation; that being thus applied to my poor soul, those temporal punishments may be remitted, which are otherwise so justly due to me on account of my sins. I entreat Thee, also, to shower down Thy choicest blessings and graces upon the Holy Catholic Church; upon the Sovereign Pontiff, our Chief Pastor; upon our temporal rulers; upon our (archbishop or bishop,) and upon other bishops and clergy; enlighten all heathens and infidels; assist those who labour in converting them; unite all hearts in the one true faith; give us grace to love Thee, and to love each other; be merciful to the souls of the faithful departed; preserve my parents, friends, relations, and benefactors; that so we may all praise Thee eternally in heaven, O God of infinite wisdom, mercy, and omnipotence. Amen.

A RESOLUTION OF AMENDMENT.

Think in the bitterness of your soul on all your former sins and negligences. Beg of God to ratify the sentence of pardon pronounced by the priest. Resolve to forfeit all earthly advantages rather than offend God hereafter;

344 A RESOLUTION OF AMENDMENT.

and determine to exhibit in your future conduct how much you have profited by your last Confession.

SECT. I.

SAVIOUR of mankind! when I look back on all the sins and follies of my misspent life, I am overwhelmed with shame and confusion. Had I offended thus against any other less merciful than Thee, I could never hope to obtain pardon, even if I had not committed one half of those sins which I have maliciously perpetrated. When I reflect on the enormity of my vices, and the number of times I have fallen into them, I must accuse myself of being a most vile, sinful, and ungrateful wretch. I have offended Thee in many ways; and through various pretexts I have wilfully followed my unruly passions and desires. Ambition, hypocrisy, vanity, covetousness, envy, lust, anger, desires of revenge or impiety, have carried me away from the paths in which I ought to tread, and have brought me into the broad way which leads to hell.

I repent, O my God; I am heartily sorry for my sins. Do Thou, O Lord, increase my sorrow. My heart is ready to break

with anguish, when I bring all this to my recollection. I may say with the Psalmist, "Through the voice of my groaning my bones have cleaved to my flesh." It is almost impossible for me to make sufficient atonement to Thee for my misspent life; if I knew how, I would willingly submit to any sacrifice which would be acceptable. No human effort, how great soever, would be sufficient to counterbalance the guilt of a single sin. Yet Thou art pleased to accept man's weak endeavours to cooperate with Thy grace. The only sacrifice Thou demandest from me, is to surrender my heart, and resign it to Thy future discretion. It is too insignificant an offering; but such as it is, it shall henceforth become wholly Thine. "A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Ps. l. 19.)

SECT. II.

It cannot adequately love and serve Thee I well know; but I will do whatsoever I can to manifest my gratitude. I will begin to lead a new life, I will love, adore and serve Thee henceforth and for

ever. Do with me what Thou wilt, dispose of me as Thou pleasest. Make me undergo whatever trials Thou hast decreed in my regard, and with Thy holy grace assisting me, I will never quail under these difficulties. I shall be Thine only, and nothing on this earth must ever separate me from Theo. I am disgusted at my baseness, and the number of my sins; I am filled with horror at the enormity of my offences; I now reject, abhor, and loathe them. Of all monsters they are most hideous and revolting. Need this be wondered at, if we only regard their instigator? The Devil, who is the father of sin, endeavours by every means in his power to lead us to its commission, through fraud, artifice, and subtlety. He endeavours to seduce all those that belong to the flock of Christ. He presents different temptations to divers persons; he trepans each of his dupes by the most ingenious methods. He imposes upon the wary as well as the heedless, upon the strong as upon the weak. Of all the enemies we have to contend with, he is most to be feared. I know not the moment he may surprise me. O God, strengthen

me with grace to resist his attacks, with resolution to defend myself when assailed, and with penetration to unmask all his designs. His rage against me now exceeds all bounds; for he sees me snatched away from his hands.

SECT. III.

I am resolved to serve God hereafter most faithfully and zealously. Yes, dearest Lord, I will serve, love, and adore Thee; I will be Thine only through every phase and vicissitude of life. Never will I bend my neck to the yoke of the devil; never shall I act contrary to Thy holy will; Thy law shall be my only guide; Thy Divine word shall be my spiritual nourishment; and the participation of bliss with Thy elect, shall be for the future my most earnest desire. Keep me now in the way I ought to go, and do not suffer me to depart from it. Neither life nor death shall ever separate Thee from me. In prosperity or adversity I shall continue to discharge my duty faithfully to Thee. With riches, or poverty, as my portion, I shall not forget Thee; if I possess trea-

sures, they shall be employed by relieving the wants of my fellow creatures, and assisting them in distress; if my means be humble, I have this consolation at least, that I am richer than the most powerful monarch whilst I continue in the state of grace. Titles or reproaches showered on me are alike immaterial: I care as much for one as for the other. Provided I be just in the sight of God, what care I for the scoffs or the empty titles bestowed by man? The only title I desire to receive from Thee is to be denominated one of Thy Elect, and this distinction shall be the height of my ambition. Neither the respect nor the disapprobation of human creatures can produce any great effect in my regard. In fine, O God, threats or persuasions, freedom or imprisonment, princes or powers, shall never be able to withdraw me from Thy service. From my last confession, I may date this my fixed resolution to avoid evil, and to do whatsoever shall be most pleasing in Thy estimation. I will adhere to this resolution so long as I live; bestow on me Thy grace, O Lord, and all the temp-tations of Satan shall not induce me to

abandon it. At length, when stretched on my deathbed, may I be able to say, "I have served Thee, O Lord, do not forsake me in this juncture; I have inviolably maintained my resolution, and grant that I may now participate in the bliss of Thy elect. Amen.

REGULATIONS FOR A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."—(Eccles. vii. 40.)

PRAYER.

O LORD GOD, my Creator and Redeemer, grant that during my mortal pilgrimage through this life, I may so order my conduct, and the tenor of all my actions, that I may be under Thy divine protection, and be ever influenced by Thy grace. Preserve me from sin, to which my evil nature is so prone; support me in temptation, or I must inevitably fall; succour me in all my spiritual necessities, as I have need of Thy assistance; pour down Thy graces upon me, for without these, I must always be found

frail and weak. O, my Divine Redeemer, protect and preserve me, point out Thy true way in all my wanderings, through this sinful and deceitful life; conduct me hereafter to the inheritance of Thy elect. May I advance each day in the paths of virtue; may I gain new victories over my passions; may faith confirm me in Thy doctrine; may hope animate me to labour for the kingdom of life eternal; and may charity characterize my conduct in my relations with Thee and all mankind. I renounce the world and its false pleasures, the devil and his temptations, I declare war against concupiscence, sensuality, pride, and all my other rebellious passions. I am resolved, with the help of Thy divine grace, to regulate my thoughts, words, actions, according to those rules I have here laid down for my guidance. Thou knowest, O Lord, my good intentions, but Thou likewise seest my frail nature and erring disposition; therefore, have that compassion for me, which a child of Adam requires. When I am about to faint through languor, support me with Thy assistance; when wearied in travelling through this passage of

death, bear me still onwards in the paths of everlasting life; when about to be overcome by temptation, draw me to Thyself in consideration of Thy mercies and benefits to me; when struggling against the torrent of my unruly passions, stretch out Thy arm and save me from a spiritual shipwreck. Keep my course and actions within those rules of life I here propose to follow. They are not capriciously adopted by me, O Lord, but they are maxims whereby Thou desirest our lives should be restrained. I will endeavour, as much as I possibly can, to have them constantly within my recollection, that I may square my life and actions by them, and regulate my conduct according to these wholesome restrictions.

RULES.

Rule 1.—Watch over all your actions with the greatest circumspection, lest the enemy take advantage of your remissness, and tempt you to sin. It is far easier to prevent his first approaches than to dislodge him, when he has once taken possession of your heart. "Watch ye," says

Christ, "and pray, that ye enter not intotemptation."—(Matt. xxvi. 41.)

RULE II.—If at any time you be so unhappy as to fall into mortal sin, you must repent sincerely for it, by making an act of perfect contrition. Humble your soul before God, whilst considering your frailty, and beg that by His grace He would enable you to persevere for the future in His love and service. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity." (1 John. i. 9.)

RULE III.—Avoid as much as possible venial imperfections, because they often lead to greater sins. "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little."—(Eccles. xix. 1.)

RULE IV.—Shun all profane places and all dangerous company. If obliged, through worldly business, to frequent the former, or to hold intercourse with the latter, at least, do not allow your actions to be contaminated by the force of bad associations, example, or habits. If possible, keep away from these temptations, and let your delay never exceed the performance of that necessary business on

which you are employed. "He that loveth danger shall perish in it."—(Eccles. iii. 27.)

RULE v.—Every morning, when you awake or rise from bed, let your first act be to address yourself to God in fervent and humble prayer. Make a resolution to avoid sin and the occasions of it, and to practise some virtue each day. Beg of God His assistance to put these resolutions into practice, and to bestow His graces upon you, that you may walk securely in His presence, whilst performing the ordinary actions of your state in life. "Therefore I say unto you, all things whatsoever you ask, when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you."—(Mark, xi. 24.)

RULE VI.—Set apart some portion of the day for devotion, as it is necessary to have God on our side when the devil makes his assaults. "For every one that asketh

receiveth."—(Luke, xi. 10.)

RULE VII.—Offer up all your actions to God, and beseech Him to pour a blessing on each undertaking before you begin its performance. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do

all for the glory of God."—(1 Cor. x. 31.)

Rule viii.—Take care to avoid a slothful life, since it is a maxim, that he who learns to do nothing, will soon learn to do worse. It is from idleness, that indevotion, tepidity, and lukewarmness in the service of God, chiefly spring. Hence, sloth is numbered amongst the capital sins, and it is the source of many other evil dispositions. "Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord negligently."—(Jer. xlviii. 10.)

RULE IX.—If possible, hear mass each day, for God bestows His choicest blessings on those who assist devoutly at this holy sacrifice. The Lord says, "Where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them."—(Matt. xviii. 20.)

RULE x.—Every morning read a chapter from some pious or instructive book, and meditate on its subject occasionally during your works of the day. Endeavour to perform the necessary duties it prescribes, and avoid all the evil which it forbids. The books which may be recommended for this purpose are, "Bohours' Pious

Reflections for every day in the month," "Challoner's Meditations," "Gahan's Sermons," "Kempis' Imitation of Christ," "Gother's Instructions on the Epistles and Gospels of the year," "Hay's Sincere or Devout Christian," the devotional works of Father Faber, &c. These books contain instructions for Christians of all classes and avocations. They should therefore be found on the shelves of every Catholic library. In these works, the Gospel maxims will be found reduced to method and to a practical form. It is by the Gospel we should regulate our conduct. For Christ saith, "Every one, therefore, that heareth these My words and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock."-(Matt. vii. 24.)

RULE XI.—During the day, practice various acts of mortification and self-denial, that so you may be able to keep down pride and self-love. It is inconceivable, in how many ways, these pious practices can be performed, and at each time rendered acceptable to God. You may either deny yourself certain meats, of which you are fond, limit at your meals

the usual quantity of food, deny your-selves certain pleasures or enjoyments; restrain vain expenditure in dress, avoid slothful indulgence, idle company and conversation, &c. Offer these little sacri-fices to God with an humble spirit, and beseech Him, that He would be graciously pleased to accept them, in union with the merits of His Son Jesus Christ. Unless for the sake of giving good example, take care to avoid the observation of others in care to avoid the observation of others in performing these pious practices, in order that humility may be exercised. It is always the delight of truly virtuous and humble persons, to serve God without ostentation, for by such secreey, the reward must be great in proportion. This course is of like consequence, in giving alms, engaging in prayer, and in other spiritual exercises. "Take heed," says Christ, "that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven."—(Matt. vi. 1.)

Rule xii.—It would be exceedingly profitable to meditate each day on the sufferings and love of our Redeemer for us, as such considerations are apt to in-

flame our love towards Him. Propose to follow His steps in the various trying afflictions of this life; learn humility by His meek example; patience by the adversities which He encountered; and that love which we should bear Him, by the sufferings and sacrifices which He endured for us. It is true, we can only follow Him at an humble distance, but more than we are able to do, He will not require from us. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked." (1 John ii. 6.)

RULE XIII.—Give alms according to your ability, and relieve those suffering members of Christ, the poor and afflicted. "Give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." (Mark x. 21.)

RULE XIV.—Pray frequently to your Guardian Angel, to your patron saint, and to the Blessed Virgin, in particular, that they may intercede for you before the throne of grace: for the saints present our prayers to God, and are heard in our behalf. "The prayers of the saints ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel." (Apocal. viii. 4.)

Rule xv.—Pray daily for the repose of

the faithful souls departed. If through your prayers they are relieved from the prison of purgatory, they will not fail hereafter to pray for their benefactors on earth. "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." (2 Macab. xii. 46.)

Rule xvi.—Read select passages from Lives of the Saints each day, that so you may be acquainted with the effective measures they took to restrain their predominant passions. Thus you will be armed with resolutions and remedies for armed with resolutions and remedies for the reformation of your own life. Perhaps no other practice will be productive of so much spiritual advantage, if performed with a proper intention. We must not only know the lives and actions of re-nowned saints, but endeavour also to imitate them. It is not only possible, but easy, to aspire to the most exalted sanctity, if the endeavour be seriously made. By aiming at such perfection, we shall hear some day that consoling sen-tence: "Come, you blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you possess you the kingdom prepared for you

from the beginning of the world." (Matt. xxv. 34.)

Rule xvII.—Before you retire to rest for the night, pray earnestly to God that He may take you under His holy protec-tion, and preserve you from all snares of the devil. After your evening prayers, repeat ejaculations while you are undressing or preparing for sleep. Say often with the prophet: "My soul hath desired Thee in the night." (Isai. xxvi. 9.)

RULE XVIII.—Before you compose your-self to sleep, think on death, of which

self to sleep, think on death, of which night and sleep are images. If in mortal sin, perhaps these words of the gospel may be applicable to you before morning: "Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee." (Luke xii. 20.)

Rule xix.—Make a daily examination of conscience before you retire to bed, recalling in sorrow of soul a recollection of the many ways wherein you may have offended God, during the course of the day. Make an act of perfect contrition for such sins, beseeching the Lord to blot out all your iniquities, and resolve to avoid these offences for the future. Say some prayers or do some future. Say some prayers or do some

other act of penance in satisfaction for them. At the end of the week make a weekly examination, at the end of the month a monthly one, and at the year's end take a general review of past annual delinquencies. It is good to make this a certain practice, as it enables us to have our sins constantly before our mind, and it always excites a wholesome fear for them. "Confess, therefore, your sins." (James v.

Rule xx.—It is of essential importance, that you regularly frequent the sacra-ments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist, at least once a month, and take particular care that you receive them worthily. It is not the frequent reception of sacraments, but the worthy manner in which they are received, that especially confers grace on him who receives. "But let a man prove himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord." (1 Cor. xi. 28, 29.)

Rule xxi.—On Sundays and holydays

redouble your prayers, austerities, and

pious exercises. If possible, attend at Vespers, Morning Prayers, Devotions, &c. in the church or chapel. Spend a considerable portion of your time in the house of God. You are bound under pain of mortal sin to hear one Mass on each of those days, when able to attend; but if you can piously hear more Masses than one, you will derive great spiritual profit by so doing. Do not engage in any corporal works, except those of great necessity, such as dressing meals, providing necessaries for the day, &c. "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." (Exod. xx. 8.)

Rule xxII.—In your outward appearance and demeanour, endeavour to be more than usually circumspect: do not give way to unbecoming levity. But let this be apparent, particularly when in company with those of a different sex. Without adopting this as a rule of conduct, we may often give occasion of scandal and bad example to our fellow-creatures. Let us endeavour, as far as possible, to discountenance all bad actions, and approve only of those which are good, so that by these means, we will not only

secure our own spiritual interests, but confer advantages and blessings on society. God has denounced severe judgments upon those who will not give edification to their fellow mortals. "Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh." (Matt. xviii. 7.)

RULE XXIII.—When about to choose a sphere of life to engage in, if possible adopt that which will allow you most liberty for attending to the affairs of your salvation, and to your spiritual improvement. "Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life everlasting." (Jude i. 21.)

RULE XXIV.—The foregoing instructions are connected with duties of different stations in life, according to the sacred writings; and each Christian can form for himself certain practical resolutions founded on these directions or precepts.

"In all thy works, aim at perfection." (Eccles. xxxiii. 23.)

If you have time or opportunity to prefer suitable spiritual reading or say other prayers, in the interval between your Confession and the reception of Holy Communion, you might adopt such practice as a means conducive to salvation. And here select whatsoever devotions or works you consider most serviceable for the occasion. Above all things, take care to avoid dangerous company, lest you might be brought into the commission of any great sin: for when several assemble together, it most commonly happens, that they engage in some immoral practice, such as calumniating a neighbour, defaming some person, speaking lightly, or resolving on some course of conduct undesirable to adopt. Avoid also whatever business you can properly dispense with, and take care that nothing shall put you in a passion, or disturb that tranquillity of mind which you should now possess, especially on the eve of your communion. Keep yourself more retired than usual on the day you receive absolution. Reflect often on the perfections and attributes of that great guest you are about to entertain: prepare the dwelling of your soul in a manner suited to His grandeur and goodness. Spend most of the day, or at least a considerable portion of it at prayer or meditation, in the retirement of your room, or in the Church, Rise early on the morning, when you are to communicate; dress yourself neatly and modestly, in order to show by your exterior deportment, as well as by your interior feelings and sentiments, that great respect you entertain towards your bounteous Saviour in the great Sacrament of Divine Love.

Debotions for Holy Communion.

PART II.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE SACRAMENT OF THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

SECT. I.—Institution and Object of this Sacrament.

To receive with proper dispositions the sacrament of Christ's body and blood is certainly one of the greatest benefits that can be conferred on sinful man. At the same time, we must take into account, not alone the possibility of acquiring such an inestimable favour, but also the easiness by which it may be obtained, provided we are endowed with suitable qualifications of mind and body. If we confess well, and be in the state of grace, we may certainly hope to receive Jesus Christ Himself, whole and entire, under the eucharistic form of bread or wine in this adorable

sacrament. The preparing of our inner habitation, the heart, for Christ's coming, is our object in confession. But in communicating we should provide all things requisite for inducing our great guest to prolong His visit. The Eucharistic institution, like all the other sacraments, is of divine origin, and Christ Himself proclaimed it at His last supper, when, after telling His disciples that the bread which He then held in His hand was His body, of which they were to partake, and that the chalice contained His blood, He most solemnly enjoined them to do what He had done, in commemoration of Him: which, in other words, meant that they should renew the mysteries of His passion and death, in an unbloody manner, by offering up, to the end of time, this holy sacrifice of the mass.

That such a sacrifice was not intended in mere commemoration of Him, without producing other great results, is plain, from consideration of the solemn manner in which it was instituted, being the last and most precious inheritance which He was about to bequeath sinful mortals. The annunciation of this holy sacrament being

His "flesh for the life of the world," was not an assertion of its constituting only a simple remembrance of some great fact; but, in truth, it is a real and lasting commemoration of Him, with a substantial and most beneficent banquet prepared for us by our Divine Saviour, and that to the end of time. Nor could we have as perfect a remembrance of that which merely implies a commemoration of some past action, as we would, when this action repeatedly performed conveys to the understanding and mind some special benefits and rewards, to both the devout adorer and worthy participator. Partaking of that flesh which is meat indeed, and that blood which is drink indeed, (St. John vi. 56) at the table of our Lord; by this holy sacrifice the passion and death of Christ is effectually presented to the mind of a true Catholic, whilst the affecting scene of Mount Calvary is renewed. The penitent beholds that "Lamb, who taketh away the sins of the world," immolated for him in an unbloody manner; the various stages of Christ's passion and death are recalled in the ceremonies of the holy mass, and these outward appearances of bread and wine become in reality the body and blood of Christ, after the words of consecration. St. Paul, in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, exclaims in a convincing manner, "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not partaking of the body of the Lord?" (x. 16.) Would these expressions simply imply a mere recollection of Christ's passion? If they were restricted in such a sense, would the apostle assure us, that the chalice contained the blood of Christ, or that the bread constituted His body? That the plenitude of the Divinity may be received also under one of the sacramental species, or that Christ's blood must be partaken of by the communicant, together with His body, under the form and taste of bread or wine, is evident from the words of the same apostle, where he says: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of our Lord." (1 Cor. xi. 27.) Here it would seem, that if the unworthy communicant receive without the proper dispositions, either

Christ's body or blood, he becomes guilty of both the body and blood of the Lord, which could not be the case, were the body and blood separated from each other. But it does not seem reasonable, that Christ's blood would be separate from His body, or His body from His blood; for when we receive the one, as a living body under either species, we cannot possibly be deprived of the other. This is a most natural conclusion.

For a Catholic well instructed in the principles of this great mystery, I need not thus enter into a defence of the doctrine of transubstantiation. It may be necessary, however, to explain the nature of the words by which this doctrine is signified. The word transubstantiation, although not found in Scripture, means a change of one substance into another; as the bread and wine, before consecration, become converted in a miraculous manner, into the real body and blood of Christ, in this Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In like manner, the word eucharist signifies a solemn act of praise and thanksgiving to the Almighty, for all His bounties and mercies dispensed to us, and especially for that singular grace vouchsafed in the institution of this Sacrament. If the objection be made, which is only futile and irrational, that neither of these words are thus appropriately applied in the Sacred Scripture, we might also ask, are the words trinity, consubstantiality, or many other expressions equally explanatory of the Christian doctrine, there found; yet Christians of all persuasions characterized their apprehension of divine mysteries by using these words? Therefore, expressions which, are not applied to Catholic dogma in Holy Scripture, should not on that account be rejected; for when we can admirably explain religious mysteries or Catholic tenets by such appropriate words, they should be received and revered by every true member of Christ's Church.

The following body of evidence, extracted from writings of the holy fathers, refer to Catholic faith and teaching, regarding this important and most venerable sacrament. A few passages are inserted out of many that could be cited. In the second century, St. Justin, one of the holy fathers, and amongst the earliest of our Christian writers, in reference to

24

this sublime dogma, writes: "That food, which with us is called the Eucharist, is allowed only to those who believe our doctrine to be true; for we do not take it as common bread or drink, but as the flesh and blood of our Incarnate Saviour." Tertullian, in the succeeding century, speaking to persons who had fashioned idols for the promoting of heathenish superstition and impiety, says: "They dare touch these hands to the body of the Lord! The Jews laid hands on Him once—these torture Him daily." Origen also cautions the faithful against permitting the smallest particle of the sacred host to fall on the ground when communicating. He again declares: "When you receive this heavenly food, you eat and drink the body and blood of the Lord; He then enters under your roof, and you are humbly to say with the centurion, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, say but the word," &c. St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, is no less explicit on this subject, in several parts of his writings. "Do not," says he, "judge of the matter by the taste, but let faith make you certain, that you are honoured

with the flesh and blood of Christ." The eloquent St. Ambrose also says: "Which is more excellent, the bread of angels, or the flesh of Christ? Light is superior to the shadow, the reality to the figure, the body of the Author of heaven, to manna from You may perhaps say, I see another thing; how can this be the body of Christ? Let us prove that this is not what nature formed, but what the blessing consecrated, and that the power of the blessing is greater than that of nature, because by this benediction nature itself is changed." St. Chrysostom also enquires: "Why were they not disturbed at This is My body? Because He said so much of it already. (John vi.) He Himself drinks, also, lest hearing His words, they might be alarmed and say, Are we drinking His blood, or eating His flesh? Let us believe God always, though what He says appears above our reason; for His word cannot deceive us, but our own senses may easily be deceived. As, therefore, He said, This is My body, let us believe without any hesitation. How many are there who say, I wish to see His person, His countenance, His clothes; but, lo! you see Himself, you touch Himself, you eat Himself! Consider what indignation you feel against Judas who betrayed Him—against the Jews who crucified Him—but take care lest you yourself be guilty of His body and His blood. To be scourged on our account, to be crucified, was not enough; He unites us to Himself. He makes us His own body, not merely by faith, but in fact and reality! Who then should be so spotless as he who partakes of this sacrifice? Should not the hand which divides this sacred flesh, and the tongue which is purpled with this miraculous blood, exceed in purity the very rays of the sun? What we are fed with, at that angels tremble! Who shall declare the power of God! Was there ever yet a shepherd who gave his own blood to feed his flock? For His part He feeds us with His body, He joins us, He binds us to Himself, that one and the same grief may move us all, if we should be deprived of this spiritual nourishment. These are not works of human power, for He who wrought them there performs them now. We hold the rank of ministers, but Christ Himself is He who sanc-

tifies and changes." St. Austin tells us that "Christ was carried in His own hands, when He said, This is My body." St. Charles Borromeo, with respect to children receiving, says: "When children of both sexes arrive at the age of ten years, provided they are capable of being easily prepared for communion, suffer them not, under pretence of ignorance, (as is often the case), to defer it longer; but rather let them be prepared in good time to participate of a sacrament, which abounds with such precious and inestimable advantages." These extracts, with many others that could be adduced, contain more useful and authoritative instructions, perhaps, concerning this holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, than several which could be produced from the works of more modern writers. The fathers, throughout their voluminous works, frequently inculcate the necessity of receiving this sacrament. They have, also, indisputably proved its superior excellence and efficacy, with its divine origin, established by Scripture, tradition, and reason.

Sect. II.—Dispositions and preparation for Holy Communion.

The conditions required by the Church, for persons who are desirous of communicating, must now be considered. These are especially twofold, viz., absolution after confession, for all who had been guilty of mortal sin, with a persistance in the state of grace; and a natural fast, by which is meant, that nothing after twelve o'clock at night be received into the stomach, by way of medicine, food, drink, or refreshment, until after the reception of Holy Communion. Even, if a person really doubted or feared that he did break this fast, he ought by no means receive, on that day, as by so doing he is guilty of a great irreverence. And no matter how small the quantity of matter may have been, this case does not essentially differ from the opposite extreme of excess. It may, however, be advisable to wash a person's mouth with water, on the morning of communion, but then care should be taken not to allow any of this water to be received into the stomach.

This is sometimes carefully done, yet always with great caution, in reverence to the holy sacrament. But, observe also, if only some slight moisture pass into the stomach in the nature of saliva, without any design, on the part of an intending communicant, this person preparing to receive will not be precluded from an ap-proach to the Blessed Sacrament on such account. There is no exemption from fasting before communion, except in the case of dying persons, who receive the Blessed Eucharist by way of viaticum. But, it must also be observed, that when a sick person is not in a supposed imminent danger of death, he cannot receive, except fasting.

In order to make a worthy communion, it would be well to observe the following rules, which contain many useful instruc-

tions, preparatory to receiving.

1. Some days before communion, perform all your actions and prayers in order to obtain those graces necessary for the discharge of so important a duty. Offer them up in the morning with this intention, and you might perform some good

work, such as an alms, an act of mortification, or a fast, with the same design.

2. Visit our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, morning and evening, on those days, to beg that He would, by His grace, dispose your heart to receive Him worthilv.

3. Read every day a chapter out of the Fourth Book of the Imitation of Christ, from Frequent Communion, or from some such work which especially treats on the

Blessed Eucharist.

4. Let your prayers, fasts, or other good works, be increased for some days previous

to Holy Communion.

5. Think well on the important work you have in hand; consider attentively who it is you are going to receive; how far you are from deserving such a great favour; and implore with fervour and humility God's grace and mercy.

6. Let these considerations be the subject of your prayers and meditations, for some days beforehand, but more especially on the night before, and on the morning when you are about to communicate.

7. Whenever you go to communion, have always in your mind a particular

good intention; such as the acquiring of some virtue, the abandonment of some vice, the knowing of God's will with regard to yourself, the greater honour of God, the relief of parents, relations, benefactors, and faithful souls departed; the conversion of infidels, heretics, and sinners in general; the spiritual health of your own soul; and that by worthily receiving Christ in this adorable sacrament, you may come to a happy union with Him, according to that promise contained in the Gospel of St. John, "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him."—(vi. 36.)

8. Meditate on the sufferings and death of your Redeemer; this sacrament being instituted for such end, that we should show forth the death of Christ, till He

come.

9. Prepare yourself by acts of virtue, especially of Faith, Love, and Humility, that so you may approach the Lord with a firm belief of His Real Presence in this Sacrament. Venerate that great sacrifice which He has offered on the cross for our redemption, and of which He here makes us partakers. Entertain an ardent attachment

and love towards Him, who has cherished us so much, and who, out of pure love, gives Himself to us in this holy sacrament. With a great sentiment of your own unworthiness, and with true sorrow for your sins, have a firm confidence in the mercies of your Divine Redeemer.

10. On the eve of your communion, be more recollected and retired than usual: think often upon the happiness you are to enjoy on the ensuing day, in receiving

your bountiful Lord.

11. On awaking, let the reception of holy communion be your first thought, and represent to your imagination, that your angel guardian addresses you in these words: "Behold, the Spouse com-

these words: "Behold, the Spouse cometh; go forth now and meet Him."

12. Arise early, with your mind thus preoccupied, so far as possible. Dress yourself modestly, and in a becoming manner, to receive the great Guest, who deigns to honour you with this visit.

13. Keep a profound silence until you have returned from Maga Tot it.

you have returned from Mass. Let it appear, by your modesty and recollection, that you are deeply penetrated with a consciousness of the sublime mystery and inestimable treasure, comprised in a Sacrament of the most ineffable dignity and excellence.

These are some of the pious practices which may be particularly recommended, and which, if properly observed, cannot fail to prepare the Devout Communicant for a due performance of this great and important affair which he has undertaken. It is evident, that the more we prepare ourselves for any work, the better must we be provided for its successful accomplishment. Hence we will acquire a greater abundance of grace, by devoutly approaching this Sacrament carefully and well disposed. We ought not content ourselves with being merely free from mortal sin, and all affection to it. Although this may prevent our Communion from being sacrilegious, and procure for us a state of grace; yet our aim ought to be still higher, and we should resolve to entertain no wilful inclination towards venial sin. There cannot be a greater happiness than to receive worthily; but what could be more impious and sacrilegious than to eat damnation to our-selves, not discerning the Body of the

Lord, by unworthily receiving the most sacred Body of Jesus Christ? This latter misfortune must be specially avoided. Christians should tremble when they approach in an unprepared and careless manner. Let that dreadful sentence of the Apostle St. Paul be continually before their minds; and if attended to, can any persons be so blind to their eternal happiness, as to shut their ears against such a dreadful denunciation? But we know how to avoid this sacrilegious crime, if we have inclination to do so: Let a man prove himself, says St. Paul, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that chalice. In this state of probation consists that worthy preparation made by a soul to receive the sacred Body and Blood of Christ. When we are about to communicate, let us consider how low we are, and what are the perfections of our heavenly Guest. Then we must perceive clearly the very wide difference that exists between God and His creature. A worm of the earth, a fragile compound of dust and ashes, a fallible, irresolute mortal, such is man: opposed to him in great attributes, we find an incomprehensible,

an eternal Being, a glorious, wise, and all-powerful Sovereign, and a most bountiful and merciful Lord. Are our sinful souls fit habitations for a God of ineffable dignity and omnipotence? Does our gracious Lord deign to visit us, and by His presence remove the stains of our past sins? Such considerations as these must sink deeply into our hearts, or dwell in our thoughts, and produce in us most heartfelt sorrow for the enormity of our offences against Him. No Christian, if he seriously dwell upon these short but useful reflections, can prove so insensible to his eternal salvation, as to make an unworthy and a sacrilegious Communion.

On the other hand, the benefits resulting from a thorough preparation, are too inestimable, not to be duly appreciated, and to be laboriously acquired. Some tepid people suppose if they begin a preparation for Holy Communion, on the eve before, or on the day they are to receive, that it will be sufficient; and this mistaken notion is most frequently entertained by those who rarely, or at distant intervals, approach the Lord's Table. Many are deceived by a notion, that the prepara-

tion for Confession dispenses with that for Holy Communion. If we cannot spend some days previously to our communicating, in suitable devotions for the occasion, let us, at least, employ several intervals of time antecedent, in meditation, in the practice of some virtue, in mortification, or in the exercise of alms deeds. Thus should we prepare ourselves for such important duty. One Communion may for ever confirm us in the continual love of God, if it be well made; and we might be endowed with the grace of final perseverance, and true constancy in our Divine Master's service, when we once taste the sweetness of His banquet. What can surpass the bounty and goodness of God to us in this Holy Sacrament! For the sanctification and salvation of all true Christians, He gives us His most sacred Body in the Holy Eucharist, as our heavenly food and nourishment! Alas! how unworthy are we of this singular favour! Not satisfied with having created and redeemed us, He bequeathed to us the most excellent of all legacies, His sacred Body-our supersubstantial bread. These and such like reflections should form the subject of our meditations, before we dispose ourselves to receive. Nothing tends so much to excite devout love and admiration, as the recollection of what our Saviour suffered for us. Meditations and reflections, on the love which Christ bears us, must produce in us some reciprocity of affection. If our love cannot be as great as that of our good Lord, at least let it be sincere. To the utmost of our power, we should endeavour to render it lasting, generous, and productive of good spiritual results.

Sect. III.—Motives to excite our devotion before Holy Communion.

The following reflections may be useful to us for exciting the love of Christ in our hearts. When filled with sincere affection towards Jesus Christ, there can hardly be any doubt about our receiving a great number of efficacious graces, as love is the very essence of this great Sacrament.

1. As to the duration of God's love towards us, we shall find that it is eternal, and that it never had a beginning. As God exists from all eternity, so long hath He loved man, and would wish to give His Divine Son to him in this incomprehensible manner. You must recollect in a transport of delight, that such a despicable creature as man has been wonderfully esteemed and beloved by God. He was pleased to think of us from all eternity, designing the Body and Blood of His only Son for our food and spiritual nourishment!

2. Our very strongest passions for earthly things are circumscribed by certain limits which they cannot exceed. But the love which God bears us knows no bounds. To manifest this in the most signal manner, He sent His Divine Son Jesus Christ, equal to Himself in substance and perfections. Thus is His gift equal to His love, whilst His love is equal to this gift; both are infinite, and beyond the reach of all human understanding.

3. In thus loving us, God was not under the least constraint to consult for our welfare; but influenced by the excess of His love, He desired to heap benefits on His lowly creatures.

4. Of ourselves we had not performed the most insignificant good action, nor acquired even the least merit towards deserving this great love; and if He has loved us to such excess, or if He has given Himself entirely to us, in this adorable Sacrament, it is all owing to His immense charity.

5. God's love for us is most pure and disinterested, as may be observed, because in no respect blended with self-seeking motives, like the friendships of this world. Of what value is all we are worth to Him, who, independently of us, possesses all happiness, power, glory, and perfection? When, therefore, He showers blessings upon us, can He have any other view but what tends to our own advantage? With this thought uppermost in his mind, let each Communicant say to himself: "Who could have imagined, O Lord, that a God, infinitely great, would. place His affections on so vile, so abject a creature, as myself? What could be Thy object, or design, O King of Glory? What couldst Thou expect from dust and ashes? That ardent charity which constitutes Thy being, that fire which at once enlightens and inflames me, also convinces me that Thou hast but one real purpose,

my eternal salvation; and consequently, Thy love is void of all self-interest. Thy design, in giving Thyself to me in this Holy Sacrament, is to absorb me in Thy love, that I may live to Thee, and Thou in me; and that, by so intimate a union, I may become one with Thee, thus changing an earthly heart, such as mine, into a heart spiritual and devoted to Thee, by this excellent pledge of Thy regard and friendship."

When you find your soul excited by these affecting sentiments, and prepared for receiving the Holy Sacrament, often address our Divine Lord in ejaculatory prayers, that by His grace He may perfect in you what has been happily begun. On the morning of your Communion, when you arise from bed, if not before, employ your thoughts on suitable meditations, such as the foregoing, and having reflected on them, maintain a profound recollection, excluding, so far as requisite, all the ordinary cares, preoccupations, and affairs of the world for that day. When you are dressed, proceed to the house of God, and assist at the morning prayers, or whatsoever preparatory devotions may be offered

there, previous to a celebration of the Holy Sacrifice.

The most proper and usual time to receive is at Mass; immediately after the priest communicates. But if then prevented from receiving by reason of bad health, or through any other reasonable impediment, we are permitted to commuimpediment, we are permitted to communicate at any other time subsequently, before noon. In our course of proceeding, we should conform to the approved local custom. When going to receive, you must direct your intention to the majesty of God, who gives Himself to you. Let your intentions be to glorify, to adore, and to thank Him through His Divine Son, Jesus Christ; to unite yourself to this Giver of all good gifts, and by so doing, to realise the accomplishment of His promises, made to all those who receive Him worthily; to revere the sufferings of Christ, by giving evidence of a lively faith, and a grateful acknowledgment for the mystery of our redemption, which Jesus Christ completed by His death and passion; to strengthen your soul in spiritual life; to receive the pledge of a resurrection to eternal life; and to gain

an increase of charity and all other virtues. Christ instituted the Blessed Sacrament in reference to all these ends and purposes; therefore, we should propose them as subjects for meditation to ourselves, before we communicate. With these intentions, it would be proper to observe the following practices, in connection with this great duty, on which we are engaged. 1st. To participate in the spirit of that religious mystery, celebrated on the day of our Communion, or to ask for grace to imitate the saint, whose festival then occurs. 2ndly. To resolve on correcting some known imperfection. 3rdly. To obtain the virtue of mortification, or resignation under some personal adversity. 4thly. To understand what may be the will of God in our regard, as to a state of life, or in reference to our future course of action. 5thly. To thank Jesus Christ for some particular benefit which we have received. Without a pure intention, or merely to have some worldly interest or object before us in communicating, would constitute a most flagrant profanation of this adorable Sacrament. No motive should induce a person to receive, when he has just grounds for suspecting a want of sufficient preparation, or purity of soul. Not even if he be in the habit of communicating once or twice a week, or each month; he should not receive through human motives, on this account, when some reasonable impediment is known to exist. In giving Himself to us. Jesus Christ desired that we should partake of Flesh which He gave for the life of this world, when we are about to approach the Communion table, whereon His precious Body lies. The gift bestowed was not intended for our damnation, but for our nourishment. What could be more impious than to receive our heavenly Guest negligently, or through mere human respect? To approach Him, in this sublime mystery, unprovided with the nuptial garment of a pure interior, would be the extreme of folly, impiety, ingratitude, and sacrilege. When our interior is not properly pre-

When our interior is not properly prepared for the reception of this great Guest, we should endeavour to remove the obstacle before we invite Him to dwell corporeally within us. Nor let us be satisfied with a lukewarm preparation.

To do so, would argue a want of respect and affection towards Him, who loves and supports us in all exigencies; who is ready to hold out His hand to us when we are about to fall; and who, to preserve our souls from eternal torments, which hereafter await unrepenting sinners, gives Himself to us wholly and unreserved in this adorable, but incomprehensible mystery of divine love. The sacrilegious nature, and the heinousness of an unworthy Communion, should prevent us from incurring such guilt, and make us recoil with horror. Every time we approach this holy table, we should firmly resolve, that for the future, we will never more offend God, but that we shall endeavour to persevere in good works, during the remainder of our lives. We should have the same devout feelings in communicating now, as if this Communion were to be our last. We know not how soon we may be called, or if we shall again receive our Lord's sacred Body; for no one can fathom the will of God as to his future destiny, no person can tell when or where the shaft of death may overtake him, and therefore, we should be

always prepared for any possible emergency. Like a thief in the night, death will come, and perhaps when we least expect him. This alarming consideration should induce us frequently to receive Holy Communion, and with it extraordinary graces during life, that we may be ready and tranquil during the last great struggle on earth. We know right well, that it is a terrible thing to fall unprepared into the hands of the living God. Yet, if we only make the effort to repent sincerely, He is good and merciful to forgive us all our offences.

SECT. IV.—Advantages of frequent and devout Communions.

Frequent Communion, when accompanied with the necessary dispositions of soul, is most desirable for the spiritual advantage of all. When Christ is received in this Holy Sacrament, and when He desires a habitation within us, the oftener, with suitable preparation, we receive so distinguished a Guest, the better for our spiritual interests. It is duly imperative on Christians, who have a desire to be

saved hereafter, that they should frequently apply to this saving sacrifice, and fountain of divine grace. This benefit is accessible to all, and will not be withheld from any person who wishes to partake of its advantages. Very many special graces are bestowed on those who frequent this Sacrament with suitable dispositions; and their lives in general should be presented as models of perfection to those who keep aloof, through various causes. Let us ask what should prevent these latter from partaking of the like advantages? Why should they be deprived of such great favours? Have not these persons as good an opportunity, and as much necessity for receiving, as those who endeavour to lead virtuous lives? Most undoubtedly; and yet the deplorable apathy, manifested by thoughtless mortals towards advancing in the paths of perfection, becomes almost an insuperable barrier against their pursuit of real happiness. Let not this artifice, so much resorted to by the devil, overcome our resolutions to advance in virtue. God is good, and will support us by His grace, if we endeavour to serve our true interests. Every consideration and

reason should urge us to this course, and nothing ought prevent us from desiring and procuring its speedy accomplishment. Self-interest alone, if no higher motive, should incite us to run, with eagerness, to the Author of all goodness. It is evident, that when we are thus restrained by our own cowardice and irresolution, no good can result from feeble and ineffective promptings of conscience under this restraint. Should we balance, between the alternatives presented, to make choice of the true Guide in our way through life? The Author of good, or the author of evil! Should we hesitate? should we deliberate one single moment in selecting our Leader? "Come to me, all you that labour," says Christ to the sinner, and what does He promise? That He would refresh us with His heavenly graces: yes, that He would pour the oil of consolation over the wounds of poor afflicted consciences ; that He would relieve even sinners from all afflictions, trials, and labours. Does not this prove, that we have true support in the assistance promised by God? When applying to Him, He gives us refreshment in that bread of life,

which is daily offered upon our altars. Our holy Mother the Church also desires that we should frequently communicate.*
No person ought to neglect this great duty, and no person should defer the happy event, except it be through a sense of his own unworthiness, and want of present preparation. Christians should take care, lest they conceal under this pretext of deferring Communion, tepidity, sloth, and indifference, or over anxiety and mere scrupulousness. When Christians truly endeavour to reform their lives; when they abstain from vicious inclinations; if they spend much of their time in the practice of alms-deeds, prayer, meditation, or spiritual reading, they may entertain a reasonable presumption that they are not actuated by unworthy motives, when approaching the Lord's Table.

The Blessed Eucharist cannot be received more than once a day by any person, no matter how well disposed. Very few indeed are admitted to Holy Communion so frequently as once a day. This great

Conc. Trid. Sezz. 22. ch. 5, St. Amb. lib. 5, de
 Sacram. St. Aug. Serm. 227.

favour, for the most part, is confined to those who have embraced holy orders, the rules of a monastic or religious life, or pious persons deemed by their Confessors aspirants to a state of great perfection. Those happy persons, thus signally favoured with a daily reception of the heavenly Spouse, have usually a better opportunity for preparation, than others engaged in the worldly affairs and concerns of this life. As a good general rule, every well disposed Christian ought to receive once a month, or still better, if he possibly can once each week. More perfect dispositions are required from those who communicate weekly, than from persons who receive at more distant intervals. Weekly communicants should live in the state of grace, free not only from mortal sin, but from every deliberate inclination or affection even for venial sin. They should also entertain a great desire for communicating, and great devotion. Many suppose themselves well disposed to communicate weekly, when, in fact, they seem little desirous to correct their spiritual disorders. They persuade them-selves that it is through ignorance, sur-

prise, or want of consideration, they fall into venial sin; when they really take no sufficient care to rid themselves of baneful habits, carelessly or wilfully contracted. But when communicants labour to avoid habitual faults and imperfections, we readily suppose that their weekly Communions will be conducive to their spiritual interests. As for those who approach two or three times each week, their lives ought to be more regular, and better spent, in proportion to the religious advantages they enjoy. They should endeavour to arrive at perfection; to overcome their evil inclinations; to acquire those virtues proper for their state of life, and perfectly prepare themselves, by devout meditation and prayer, when allowed to communicate. Monthly communicants should carefully avoid the commission of mortal sin; and endeavour to live in the constant state of grace, by flying from all immediate occasions that might lead to it. No person should presume to communicate very frequently, except he make use of his best endeavours to shun temptation, and abandon all sinful habits and desires, grievously offensive to God. Many-unfortunately very many—do not approach this Sacrament except during that time, appointed for compliance with the Paschal Precept, which is on one of the days included between Palm and Low Sunday, or when the time is still any further extended, as in some particular countries. Perhaps they might not think of coming even once a year, were it not that they would incur the heavy censures, which the Church pronounces against those who do not approach within this time. A sacrilegious Communion must be avoided by such dilatory penitents; for this profanation will not satisfy the precept, but, on the contrary, it renders a sinner still more guilty in the eyes of God. Persons who are about to make their Paschal Communion ought to confess in the early part of Lent; for it often happens, that those who thus dalay, are not absolved immediately after their first Confession, their consciences being frequently over-burthened, during such a lengthened period of neglect, with many and grievous offences. In several of these cases, a want of sufficient preparation, reflection, or contrition, &c., would oblige their director

to defer absolution, until his penitents would be found in a frame of mind prepared for its reception.

SECT. V.—Instructions on a Spiritual Communion.

For the benefit of those devout Christians, who are desirous to participate in the fruits of a Spiritual Communion, a

few directions are herein given.

By Spiritual Communion is meant a strong and an earnest desire to unite the soul with our Lord Jesus Christ, by pious Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, whilst anticipating His advent in the Most Blessed Sacrament. We should endeayour to be free from mortal sin, and from all affection to it. We should elicit devout sentiments and prayers, in reference to the real presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist; whilst aspirations of penitence, love, and adoration should be directed towards the end of a speedy and more intimate union with our Blessed Saviour in this Most Holy Sacrament of His precious Body and Blood. It would be proper, if possible, to communicate spiritually in presence of or whilst making visits to the adorable Eucharist.

If we choose, we may communicate in spirit every hour, and nothing need prevent this, but our own negligence or want of preparation. Spiritual Communions are oftentimes of greater advantage than Sacramental ones. When the latter are not attended with due preparation and affection, the former are by far more advantageous to the soul, and more pleasing in the sight of God. When our souls are duly disposed to receive God's inspirations by a spiritual Communion, the Divine Majesty, ever favourable to our lawful wishes, and attentive to our wants, is ready to bestow on us many graces, and elevate our souls to many holy aspirations.

The advantage of communicating spiritually is evidently great. Its efficacy cannot be properly estimated, except by those who are constantly in the habit and practice of contemplating and experiencing the sweetness of God's presence. It generates a desire for receiving Christ Sacramentally, and of making atonement

to His offended justice. It prepares the soul for the coming of Christ, and produces in us a contempt for all other possessions, in comparison with Him. These are the leading features, and they form the peculiar pious efficacy of a Spiritual Communion. The preparation and method for participating in its advantages require a few remarks by way of illustration:

I. Turn your thoughts to the immensity of God, and after some reflection on the multitude of your offences against Him, excite your heartfelt sorrow for

having offended Him.

II. Recollect your last sacramental Communion, and being inflamed with the love of Christ, and the desire of receiving Him again, say, "When, O gracious Lord, will that happy day arrive, when I can communicate sacramentally? Vouchsafe, O Lord, to hasten that long expected dav."

III. Beseech God, with a lively faith and holy love, that He would deign to visit your heart, and therein take up His abode, that He would overload you with the multitude of His graces, and protect

you from all sin and all stratagems of the devil, who constantly wages war

against your soul.

IV. Whenever you perform any acts of virtue, or practise mortification in some of your passions, beg, at that time particularly, that God would shower down His graces on you in abundance, and wholly

possess your heart.

V. If you desire to communicate spiritually in this manner, when you have not an opportunity of receiving Sacramental Communion frequently, prepare devoutly for this conference of the heart with God overnight. In the morning when you awake, consider the advantages which arise from thus spiritually receiving Him. Earnestly desiring the approach of that happy day, when or that happy day, when you can sacramentally communicate, say; "Grant, O my God, that I may receive Thee in spirit, since I am so unworthy and unprepared as to be made a partaker of the advantages afforded in this Holy Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood. May I continually increase in virtue and good works, and eagerly aspire to a more intimate union with our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYERS BEFORE SACRAMENTAL COMMUNION.

MOST merciful God, my Creator J and Redeemer, I am grieved to the heart that I have ever offended Thee. when I ought to have loved Thee above all things, for Thy infinite goodness and bounty towards me. I am grieved for having repaid Thy favours with ingrati-tude; but Thou, O Lord, be merciful to me, for Thy Name's sake; I am firmly resolved never to offend Thee more, and I will carefully avoid hereafter all occasions of sinning. With this view, I now approach Thy Sacrament, desiring to be strengthened in Thy love, and to abide with Thee for ever. I invite Thee also to visit now Thy humble servant, and to direct him by Thy heavenly graces. I offer Thee, O my God, this holy communion, to the glory of Thy Name, and for my own spiritual advantage. I will sacrifice every wish of my own to the least intimation of Thy pleasure; I will extol Thy holy Name, because Thou art infinitely good, and Thy mercy endureth for ever! What can I desire beside Thee? What can I want if I possess Thee? On Thine own account, if I am bound to render Thee homage, I should proclaim how insignificant must my fealty be, because I yet love and serve Thee in a manner little proportioned to Thy deserts. Who but Thee can I adore in heaven! and who but Thyself, can I long for upon earth! For Thou art my portion and my inheritance, and Thou wilt bestow upon me the riches of Thy unspeakable bounty.

Thou art worthy, O Lord, for Thy great excellence, wisdom, and power, to be praised, honoured, and glorified, by every creature. Therefore will I confess to Thee, with my whole heart; I will glorify Thy Name for ever, I will offer Thee a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. O be Thou blessed, and praised, and glorified, and extolled, for evermore! Amen.

INVITED, O Lord, to this heavenly feast, what shall I do, wretched, in-

digent, worthless as I am, if I be not provided with a nuptial garment? I am conscious of numberless transgressions. Look on Thy Divine Son, Jesus Christ, the Mediator between us and Thee; regard the great sacrifice offered by Him who hath not committed sin, but who hath made a propitiation for the sins of this world. Look, O Lord, on the face of Thy Christ; remember the labours of His life, the bitterness of His passion, the anguish of His death. I offer Thee all He has suffered in atonement for my iniquities, that through the merits of His sacrifice, Thou mayest mercifully pardon me my crimes, and take not vengeance on my manifold offences. What return shall I make to Thee, O Lord, for all Thou hast bestowed upon me! How shall I thank Thee, who hast so often pardoned my iniquities; who hast looked upon me with mercy and forgiveness; who hast so often filled me with good things; who hast provided for my body and soul? Because Thou hast created me, I owe Thee my entire being; because Thou hast redeemed me, I owe Thee still more. But, what am I? Only dust and ashes. Of what

am I possessed? Only wretchedness and vanity. Thou, O Lord, canst not receive any increase of possession by any offering I can make Thee. Behold, therefore, Thy beloved Son! Him, O Heavenly Father, do I offer Thee in return; for I cannot present Thee with a greater gift or a more acceptable sacrifice.

O Lord, rich in all good, and bountiful in Thy favours, from whom, by whom, and in whom, all things do exist. I, alas! am wretched and poor; but what may I not obtain from Thee, who hast given to us the very source of all grace! In Thine only begotten Son are found all the treasures of goodness, wisdom, and liberality; let these satisfy for my extreme indigence. I beseech this merciful Redeemer to intercede for me; He deserves to be heard by Thee for His humiliation, obedience, and sufferings. Through Him, grant to Thy Church a prosperous increase; to the just, perseverance; to sinners, pardon; to the departed, rest; and to all Christians, Thy grace and life everlasting. Amen.

OMNIPOTENT and most merciful God, Thou art truly good, and I am continually evil. Thou art most holy and just, I most wretched and sinful. Thou art the sovereign medicine and our life, I am weak, sickly, and dead. Thou art light and truth itself, I am altogether vanity.

What shall I say, then, my Creator? Hear me, most bountiful Redeemer! Consider not the wickedness of my hands, but look on the wounds of Thine own. Behold, my Lord God, the unjust sentence recorded against Thee by Thy persecutors; read that inscription affixed to the cross on Calvary, and heal my sinful soul through the efficacy of Thy sacred wounds. Behold, from a deep sense of my miseries, I sigh unto Thee. Thou art my Creator, comfort me; I cry unto Thee, Thou art my life, quicken me. To Thee I lift up my voice; help me, and restore me to Thy favour.

But what is man that he can thus speak to his Creator? Pardon Thy servant, O Lord, who presumes to speak to so great a Master! O, my Lord, it is my want that urges me, it is my misery that compels me to approach the Heavenly Physician. I am sick, therefore I hasten to the Comforter; I am blind, therefore I ap-

proach to the Light; I am dead, therefore I have recourse to Life.

To Thee, O Jesus of Nazareth, I apply, Thou art the fountain of life! O Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me, and heal my wounded soul; that I may see Thee, and come to Thee, and in Thy presence behold everlasting light. Spare and pardon me, O Lord, for my days are numbered and are filled with much misery. What is life, O my God, but a shadow, which suddenly vanishes! Like a flower, that flourishes in summer and appears bright, whilst in winter it presently withers; even so my frail and deceitful life must pass away.

I know most assuredly I am to die; yet when or how is altogether hidden from me. I therefore beseech Thee, O meek and merciful Saviour, preserve me in grace and support me by Thy power and strength. Appear Thou to me, O everlasting light, and shine in my heart, that I may rejoice in Thee. Come to me, O my Life! most noble and most sweet, that through Thee I may live with Thee, and behold Thee face to face, in Thy kingdom for ever! Hear me, O my Lord God, for

the glory of Thy name, and for the felicity of my own soul, extend Thy mercies to me. I adore and worship Thee, Jesus Christ, King of Israel, Light of the Gentiles, and King over all earthly potentates! Lord of Sabaoth, most Mighty power of the Omnipotent God! We worship Thee, O, inestimable price of our redemption! O Jesus, who, out of Thy mercy, hath inclined Thy Father to commisserate our sad condition, and who hath reconciled us to offended justice, receive us into Thy holy protection!

O, dearest Saviour, Jesus Christ, we praise the multitude of Thy tender mercies; we proclaim the abundance of Thy sweetness; we offer Thee thanksgiving for the greatness of that bounty which Thou hast shown to us sinners, a most perverse and ungrateful generation!

PARDON me, O my God, look not so much to the number of my sins, and regard not the greatness of my offences, but remember the multitude and extent of Thy mercies. Shall I presume to approach Thy holy table? Shall I partake of Thy sacred body immolated on our altars?

Yes, O my sweet Jesus, Thou art good and merciful. Were it not for this consideration, I would have a very slender hope of obtaining favour. Graciously hear me, O my God, for I will proclaim my distressed condition; listen to those complaints regarding my helpless state, which unfortunately I must unfold. I am compelled to seek Thy assistance—to look for Thy protection, as I would apply to a kind parent. I must importune Thee for those favours, the obtaining of which concerns my spiritual and eternal welfare. I am a sinful and an ungrateful wretch, to have forfeited Thy goodness, on account of my crimes. I was endowed with numberless graces—consoled with Thy divine promises—and supported with Thy pressing solicitations. I was filled with Thy delights—I was encouraged by Thy presence—I was overpowered with the abundance of Thy sweetness -I was acquainted with Thy divine law and holy precepts. These I disregarded or did not perform. Art Thou so good, so merciful, so tender, as to forget all these my offences, and to unite me once again with Thyself in the sacred banquet of Thy

body and blood? Yes, to my shame—to my utter confusion—I must be obliged to own, that Thy mercies far exceed the rigour of Thy judgments. Thou art willing not only to forgive my past offences, but almost to forget them. Shall I ever make sufficient reparation, O Lord, to Thy offended justice and goodness? Shall I ever cease to love Thee, to extol Thy goodness and Thy mercies, whilst I must bitterly deprecate my own ingratitude? Yes, O Lord, I proclaim it, without ceasing, Thou art infinitely good and merciful, whilst I am the most ungrateful of all creatures: I, who ought to be among the first to love, adore, and serve Thee. Alas! dear Jesus, was it for me Thou hast suffered? Was it for such a sinner as I am, that Thou wert mocked, blindfolded, and buffeted? Was it for me Thou wert spit upon, reviled, stript naked, and scourged at the pillar, crowned with thorns, struck with a reed, obliged to bear the weight of Thy cross to the place of execution, to be nailed thereto for my sins, and for those of all mankind? But what greater benefit couldst Thou confer upon us than that which Thou hast left

us in the most Blessed Eucharist, namely, Thy own most precious body and blood? Thou couldst not favour me in a more signal manner than by thus leaving me this most excellent food, as a testimonial of Thy divine love. Wretch that I am, let me fully contemplate the greatness of this gift, and how unworthy I am of its acceptance. Let me think on what my God has done for me, and can I be longer hardened in guilt? A vile and worthless miscreant, nourished and refreshed with Thy own most sacred body and blood! Ought I not, then, turn sincerely to Thee and repent of all my former crimes? Should I not follow Thy divine counsels, and resign myself wholly to Thy protection? Yes, O Lord! I will consider myself as the prodigal child; but number me henceforward as one of Thy faithful servants, and look upon me as Thy true penitent. Grant me grace, never more to offend Thee, or to swerve in any particular from the performance of Thy divine will. Amen.

O LORD, my God! prevent Thy servent in the blessing of Thy sweetness, that I may deserve to approach

worthily and devoutly to this most won-derful Sacrament of Love. Quicken my heart with Thy grace, and awaken me from the lethargy of spiritual sloth; visit me with Thy inexpressible and holy in-fluences, that I may taste in spirit the sweetness and delights which are found in this sacrament, excelling even all the other sacraments in dignity. Enlighten other sacraments in dignity. Emigneen also my mind in some measure to appreciate so great a mystery. Strengthen my convictions, that I may believe it with an undoubting faith. For this is not the doctrine propounded by man, but one delivered in Thine own words; no human invention, but Thy sacred institution. No man is able of himself to understand the depths of Thy wisdom, or enter into those secrets of Thy providence, not even revealed in all their immensity and sublimity to the very angels. How therefore can I, an unworthy sinner, presume to understand or realize the excellence of so great a mystery?

I ORD, I approach Thee with faith and reverence in the simplicity of my heart, and through Thine own pressing

invitation. I believe that Thou, both God and man, art really present in this most holy Sacrament. It is then Thy will that I should receive Thee, and unite myself to Thee by the most intimate union. I beseech Thy clemency, through this account, to bestow on me a more than usual grace, that I may be entirely dissolved and transported with the excess of Thy love, and that I may no more give admittance to any other thought, which has not its foundation in Thee. For this most sublime and most adorable sacrament is the health both of soul and body, the remedy for all our spiritual distempers. It is that, by which our vices are cured and our passions curbed, by which our temptations are subdued and weakened. It is that, by which greater grace is infused. virtue is perfected, faith confirmed, hope strengthened, with charity kindled and intensified. Thou hast bestowed and wilt yet bestow many benefits in this holy sacrament upon devout communicants, my God, the Saviour of my soul, the renova-tor of human infirmity, and giver of all inward comfort! Thou dost favour them with much consolation under many afflic-

tions; and Thou dost raise men from dejection and practical irreligion to hope in Thee. Thou dost refresh and shine interiorly upon them with new graces, insomuch that they who before communion were found wanting both in that true peace of mind and affection towards Thee, have found themselves happily changed for the better, owing to the heavenly nourishment partaken of in this sacred banquet. Such are Thy bounteous dispenbanquet. Such are Thy bounteous dispensations towards Thy elect, that they may sincerely own, and evidently experience, how little they can do of themselves, and how much they are able to effect when strengthened by a cooperation with Thy grace. For of themselves they are cold, apathetic, and insensible to devotion; but by Thy grace they grow fervent, earnest and devout. For is there one to be found, coming with humility, and tasting at the fountain of Divine sweetness, who will not carry away with him some agreeable draught of spiritual refreshment? Or, how can a man stand close to a great fire without feeling some of its heat? Thou art a fountain of living water, overflowing yet ever full; a fire of Divine love which

burns without end, and with undiminished intensity.

If then, it be not permitted me to drain this perennial fountain, nor to drink until I have been satiated. I will at least endeavour to imbibe a full draught of heavenly wisdom, and will moderate my thirst with a few drops of Thy comforting love, that I may not quite faint away for want of spiritual refreshment. And though I be not yet perfect like the blessed in heaven, nor burn with holy rapture like the cherubim and seraphim, I will nevertheless excite my devotion, and prepare my heart to feel some glow of that heavenly flame, whenever I humbly receive this life-giving sacrament. Whatever may be wanting in me, do Thou, my good Jesus, and most blessed Saviour, most bountifully and gra-ciously supply, who wert pleased to ex-tend Thy invitation without reserve: "Come," sayest Thou, "to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

For my part, I labour in the sweat of my brow; I am racked with anguish of heart; I am deeply loaded with sins; I am disturbed with temptations. With many evil passions I am perplexed and almost overpowered; and in this misery there is no one to help me, none to rescue or redeem me, but Thou, O Lord God, my Saviour. To Thy care I commit myself and all I possess, for my only security in this life, and to obtain eternal happiness in the next. Take me under Thy protection, for the honour and glory of Thy holy name; Thou who hast prepared for me Thy most sacred body and blood, to be my nourishment. Grant me, O Lord, that my devotion may be inspired with fresh ardour and love, by a frequent access to the treasure of all grace in these Sacred Mysteries. Amen.

O LORD God, can I persuade myself that I am sufficiently prepared to receive Thy most adorable body? O miserable wretch that I am; let dust and ashes be confounded! I who am a sinful worthless creature; and Thou, a God most bountiful, incomprehensible, allwise, supremely good, and omnipotent! Thy grace is absolutely necessary for my spiritual welfare; therefore do not withhold Thy Divine assistance from me.

May I approach Thy sacred table with reverence and purity; may I be supported with Thy consoling assurances; and may I be nourished with a hope to reign with Thee hereafter in heaven, there to enjoy Thy presence in company with Thy holy saints and angels. Amen.

ACTS BEFORE COMMUNION.

An Act of Contrition.

Renew before God your sorrow for the numberless sins you have committed, and beg of Him to ratify His pardon already obtained in Confession. Give Him thanks for all His benefits, of which you are so unworthy, but especially for giving you His adorable body in the Blessed Eucharist. Lament all those faults, so opposed to the purity and adorable perfections of your Divine Saviour. In a general manner, review all the past misdeeds of your life, and resolve for the love of God who created and redeemed you, to pass the remainder of your life in lamenting the commission of sin. Make a firm resolution to recommence a new life.

SECT. I.

WHAT tears, what protestations, what wailings, or what sighs, shall express my sorrow for having offended my good Lord and Redeemer! Alas, dearest

Saviour, what reparation can I make to Thee? Shall I be ever able to atone for the multitude of my sins? I know that were I to spend the remainder of my life dissolving away in tears; if I had resolved to mortify all my passions and appetites, during the rest of my days, spent in the most penitential exercises; still would this lamentation and austerity fall infinitely below the proportion of atonement or reparation required by my offences. Repentance in the one case, and past guilt in the other, would be quite disproportioned, were not Thy mercies interposed to satisfy for Thy offended justice. Oh my God! O Creator of men! enter not into judgment with Thy servant.

I am loaded with the multitude of my offences,-with a number of crimes committed against Thy Divine Majesty. I am bowed down to this earth at the recollection of my baseness. I am ashamed to approach Thy holy banquet, O Lord. Thou knowest where my weakness lies; support me with all Thy strength. Bring all Thy assistance to a weak but still loving child, and do not let me fail. Grant me Thy grace, O Divine Redeemer,

to lament all past offences from the bottom of my heart, and to mourn without ceasing for having offended Thee. My director has already pronounced absolution for all my sins, as Thou hast commissioned him to retain or loose them; and I know, also, that I am forgiven by Thee, if I sincerely repented of them as I ought, and if I endeavoured to meet Thy clemency by a firm purpose to offend Thee no more, and to walk henceforward in the ways of justice.

SECT. II.

I now sincerely protest, that I am most heartily sorry for having offended Thee; and I grieve for my past crimes. Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. So said Thy apostle, and I venture to repeat this heartfelt sentiment. My love, though not so fervent, so intense, or so affectionate, as his had been, is nevertheless great and sincere. I should indeed be wanting to myself and to Thee, were it not thus entertained. But, Lord, I am sinful and frail, therefore compassionate my follies and mise-

ries. Pardon me, my dearest Saviour, all my errors and wickedness. I know my sins to be great in malice, in atrocity, and in baseness: but I know Thee also to be a God of mercy and compassion, willing rather to pardon than to avenge. In justice Thou couldst not but punish me: but my tears I hope shall prevail on Thee to extend Thy mercy towards a poor, insignificant creature, as I undoubtedly am. But for Thy mercy, what should be my condition? Despair I certainly must; for I could not know what should be done to repair my faults. To cover myself with still greater confusion, if possible, I must look to all the benefits Thou hast bestowed upon me-all Thy favours conferred-all the comforts afforded me. and all things indispensably required for the enjoyment of life, given to me. I was created, educated, fed and clothed by Thee, endowed with reason, senses, talents and faculties, furnished with graces and means to avoid sin, redeemed and made an heir to Thy heavenly kingdom, which Christ by His blood has opened to all sinners.

SECT. III.

This, and more than I can recount, I have received, and what has been my return for these singular favours? Ah, dearest Saviour, it would have been something in my regard, had I done anything to merit these Divine graces. But far otherwise has been my course of action. I am fully sensible of my baseness. Let tears of contrition and remorse have full vent at the recollection of my past ingratitude. All these benefits Thou hadst intended for my good, I have perverted them to my ruin. My creation, which Thou hast intended should redound to Thy honour and glory, was diverted to dishonour and darkness by my enemy, the devil. My education, which Thou hast desired should be available for the excitement of others to virtue, has been employed in dissuading them from it, by word and example. My food and rai-ment Thou hast provided, for my support and convenience; they have been employed indulging luxuriousness and profusion in too many instances, and in a

manner far different from that end for which they were intended. My reason. which Thou hast purposed should be engaged in contemplating Thy good-ness and Divine attributes, or in promoting my own spiritual interests, has been diverted from its proper object and directed towards what is bad and and directed towards what is bad and pernicious. My talents, which ought to be continually exercised in directing others towards the discharge of their duties, if not employed actively against Thy previdential decrees, are habitually adverse to Thy precepts, when not engaged promoting the glory and exaltation of Thy holy Name. My faculties and senses deceive me when I think to impose on engaged and discogned the presence of myself and disregard the presence of Thy Divine Majesty. They, being mis-directed, turn me insensibly towards my enemy, the devil. Thou hast redeemed me, for the express purpose of becoming Thine; but after the infinite pains Thou hast taken in restoring me to the fold of Thy elect, I hasten from Thee and walk to the very gates of hell. When I am entitled to claim the inheritance of Thy heavenly kingdom, my perverted inclination prompts me to descend towards the infernal regions. O unfortunate man! always blind to thy own interest in securing the life to come, into what extremities and inconsistencies art thou not driven? Thou shalt yet be condemned by thy own admissions and practices. Thou hast reason sufficient, to discern between right and wrong, or to choose freely, yet which wilt thou prefer?

SECT. IV.

But, Lord, all Thy gifts to us are even lessened in our regard, if I may so express it, before this favour of leaving Thy precious body and blood to us in Thy Holy Eucharist, that heavenly banquet of angels. The endeavour to comprehend or explain Thy intentions in doing so, must surpass the range of my understanding; I must only conclude it to be simply because Thou lovest us. But would it not be just to return something like love for affection such as Thine? Alas, I do at best but faintly reciprocate Thy goodness; whilst on the contrary, I do everything to provoke Thine anger, and excite Thy vengeance against myself. O Lord, it is won-

derful how Thou canst bear so long with me, being a wretch so sinful and abandoned. I cannot but admire Thy forbearance, for not having struck me dead, in the midst of my sins. I am unworthy, Lord, utterly unworthy of all Thy benefits. I deserve not Thy favours—in strict justice I ought not to be spared. I rely on Thy mercy, extend it towards me; I hope in Thy goodness, do not abandon me. I look with confidence on Thy kind promises; fulfil them to the gratification of my heart's best desire. This accomplish on Thy part, and I will endeavour feebly to requite Thy goodness, by a firm and rooted detestation of all my past sins. I lament from the very bottom of my heart all those sins, which in Confession I revealed to Thy minister, besides all those which I have not been able to recollect, and these must be considerable. All the offences, imperfections, and omissions of my whole life are written down and noted by Thee, yet I deprecate my condemnation, because Thou wilt forgive all, through the merits of Christ Jesus Thy Son, and through my own sincere sorrow.

SECT. V.

If Thou wilt not attend now to my tears, I will weary heaven and earth with my entreaties and sighs, until I move Thee to take compassion on me. In tears, sighs, and groans, will I spend the remainder of my life, for having so grievously offended Thee. Mourn, O my soul! lament with bitter tears thy misfortunes and thy failings, in being so unhappy as to grieve thy God. Pour forth thy wailings, O criminal wretch, mourn for thy rebellion. I endeavoured to outrage Thy Divine Majesty, and did commit sin against a being of infinite goodness and holiness; thus showing God my resolution, to declare openly against His laws and ordinances. He wished me to abstain from all sinful inclinations; but to manifest my repugnance to His desires; I hurried headlong to my own destruction, notwithstanding His having pointed out to me the way to safety and happiness. I saw the precipice over which I was about to fall, yet I suffered the devil to blindfold me, and then lead me to its very brink. I ran along this dangerous course with him, rejoicing in my folly, nor did I reflect for a moment where my career might end. Scarcely, after all, did I tear away the bandage from mine eyes, and with difficulty return back to Thee. If I did not determine to be decidedly hostile to Thee, O my dearest Saviour, I would not have sinned in the manner I did; for Thou art an example of all virtues, the model of purity, the lover of all those who have the courage to imitate Thee. I should have followed Thy footsteps to become faithful to Thee, and to tread in Thy traces. To imitate in a high degree Thy virtues might exceed my power; but to follow at an humble distance was perfectly possible. Yet this noble course I did not ambition. I am inexcusable and unpardonable—I admit candidly that I deserve Thy worst punishments. Yet spare me, O my Saviour: take compassion on me and save me. Henceforth I will follow, wheresoever Thou shalt desire to lead me. I shall be constantly with Thee; I shall continue to be Thy faithful disciple.

SECT. VI.

Whilst the breath continues in my body, I must always grieve for the sins of my life, and lament that I ever committed them. Let all of them, O Lord, be placed before mine eyes in their proper colours—let all of them be exhibited in their most glaring features—that my heart may be moved and may overflow with true contrition. All the impurities, detractions and calumnies, all the tepidity and sloth, all the wantonness and profligacy of my whole life, are fully known to Thee. Do Thou, in Thy mercy, make them thoroughly detestable to me. know by sad experience the dreadful nature of sin. I know its degrading and death-producing effects; I know its nature, irreconcilable with the infinite purity of Him who reigns above. If I have committed crimes still more heinous, —as perhaps I may—than those above-mentioned; I beseech Thee to pardon them, and to grant me absolution in full. For the rest of my life, O Lord, I will spend the small remainder of my days lamenting my crimes, which so often deprived me of Thy holy grace. I would willingly do penance in sackcloth and ashes; in mortification, fasting, groaning and tears. I will declare, what I cannot hide, my well known unworthiness to Thee, who art the God of my heart; that I may acquire Thy favour by my self-abasement and humility. I will subdue all my passions and sinful appetites, with the assistance of Thy grace; for without it, I can do nothing. Thy mercy is great, O Lord, or I could not expect pardon. But my gratitude ought to be also great, when Thou hast vouchsafed thus to pardon me.

SECT. VII.

If I can even presume that my sins are forgiven, and that I am well prepared for the Holy Eucharist, I shall not on this account repress my sorrow, or cease to grieve. My sins, committed during the former part of my life, are great and numerous. I shall therefore constantly lament them, and keep my body under a wholesome subjection for the future.

Whilst I do so, I shall look with confidence to Thee, and express my love for Thee in unmeasured terms. From this moment henceforth Thou art mine, and I am Thine. I say so, in the conscious strength of that love I bear Thee, I will endeavour to mend my ways, and advance in virtue; I will resolve with Thy assistance to follow in Thy footsteps without failing, to throw myself into the ranks of Thy elect; and I will fight with courage under Thy leadership, against my adversary the devil. I will be wary and watchful; I will attend to all his manœuvres, detect and defeat them; I will narrowly watch for his insidious approaches, and draw out all my forces to sustain that virtue he most assails. With Thy assistance he will be obliged to fly. I well know that Thou wilt not be indifferent to my struggles; that Thou wilt be ready in time sufficient to assist me with Thy grace, that I may repel his attacks. Number me, O Lord, from this time forward, as one of Thine own followers: write my name in the Book of Life, and enrol me in the list of Thy elect. Thus may I come to meet the embraces of my Divine Lord,

and live for ever in His heavenly kingdom, in company with all the holy angels. Amen.

An Act of Faith.

Profess your faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Beg of Him to enliven this faith by His grace. Relinquish all curious speculations on this sacrament, resting on His assurances; captivate your reason to the announcement of this divine mystery. Return Him thanks for giving so inestimable a benefit as that of His body and blood; bestowed on poor blind mortals, unworthy of such inestimable favour. Thank Him for bringing you up in a belief, not only of this, but of every other doctrine of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, divinely established by Him.

SECT. I.

I BELIEVE, O Lord, increase my faith! I believe all Thou hast revealed to me, through our holy mother the Church. If I cannot comprehend many mysteries, I rely upon Thy assurances. Thou art all wise and entirely good, therefore Thou wilt not deceive me. Under the form, appearance, colour, and taste of bread and wine, Thou art miraculously, really, and corporally present, in the eucharistic species. As a last testament for unworthy man, Thou hast left us Thy precious body

and blood to be our daily food and sacrifice; to support us by its life-living substance, against all dangers, temptations, troubles, and turmoil of this world. Thy Church teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are three distinct Persons, existing from all eternity, and are yet only one God. Now can I comprehend this great mystery? Certainly I cannot; but I believe it as firmly as I believe, that our Divine Redeemer appeared on this earth.

SECT. II.

These mysteries may surpass the force of my reason; but they are nevertheless to be believed on Thy unerring word. In like manner, Thou hast said, when taking bread into Thy hands, This is My body; and when taking the chalice, This is My blood. Afterwards adding; Do this for a commemoration of me. (Luke, xxii. 19.) What plainer proof of this sacrament and sacrifice, if I wanted it, than these words afford: This is My flesh, for the life of the world, he that eateth Me, shall live for ever. I do not exclaim like the incredu-

lous Jews: How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? (John vi.) I believe, O Lord, Thy promises must be fulfilled; I know that Thy power is unbounded; nothing can be difficult, and all things are possible to Thee, Thou who hast delivered Daniel from a lion's den; the three children from a fiery furnace; the Israelites from a long term of Egyptian bondage; who hast brought Enoch and Elias alive into heaven; can it be impossible for Thee to descend from heaven, and conceal Thyself from mortal eyes, under this sacramental veil of the Holy Eucharist? Who, for a moment, would entertain the slightest doubt in Thy ability to do those things? Who would not give credit to all Thy promises, no matter how wonderful their import? Thou hast deemed it right, to show us our own weak understanding and want of knowledge regarding heavenly things, by proposing mysteries of religion far above our limited conception. Yes, O Lord, I know this mental imbecility of Thy most intelligent creatures, and, therefore, I shall ever believe on Thy word, that Thou art really, truly, and substantially present under the species of bread and

wine, after the words of consecration have been pronounced, according to the intention of Thy ministers, the priests of Thy holy Church. If my faith should become weak or wavering, do Thou, by Thy grace, enliven and confirm it. For my part, I will endeavour to avoid all merely curious and unnecessary investigations, regarding the mystery contained in this incomprehensible sacrament. I have been assured of your Divine presence in it, on the very best authority; and that shall be quite sufficient for my belief. Repress, O Lord, all my restless enquiries into matters removed from my comprehension, and if I endeavour to step beyond the prescribed limits of faith, send forth Thy spirit and restrain me. If Thy great mysteries could be investigated or comprehended by man, they would neither be wonderful, nor a subject of admiration, to poor benighted mortals.

SECT. III.

I return Thee innumerable thanks, O gracious Saviour, for this singular benefit conferred on me. What, give Thy body

for food, to vile, wretched worms! Could condescension, such as this, proceed from a Divine source, and be directed to console and comfort a poor, ignorant, rebellious wretch? Yes, Lord, a bitter and implacable rebel I have been: one that raised the standard of sedition against an over indulgent Monarch—one that joined with the forces of a fallen angel, Lucifer, warring against Thee—one that continued his hostile career against Thee, despite even of self-interest, foolishly supposing he could sustain this wicked revolt against an invincible God.

SECT. IV.

Pardon me, O Lord, remember not my ingratitude, and do not take vengeance on the head of a wicked sinner. Give me Thy gracious body, as the most effective spiritual remedy against all illusions of the devil; that being strengthened by Thy grace, I may be able both to fight against temptations of the flesh and spirit, and thus overcome my greatest spiritual enemies. Thy bounty, O Lord, has been incomprehensibly great, to bestow upon

me, and upon all mankind, such an inestimable benefit. I can never cease to thank Thee, O Lord, for Thy goodness. Were not even all Thy favours immense and unrestricted in my regard, I should nevertheless unceasingly wonder at their profusion; but, as the case stands, I most sincerely and gratefully thank Thee for Thy boundless charity. I am unworthy of the least favour, at Thy hands; but I ought, at least, endeavour thankfully to acknowledge them. I will begin, O Lord, from this moment forward, to advance steadily in the way of Thy commandments, and I will continue faithful to Thy precepts. I will never cease to thank Thee for this benefit of divine faith; I will believe whatever Thou shalt propose, how incomprehensible soever it may prove to me. I believe all those Divine mysteries Thou hast revealed; that Thou hast become Man by the power and operation of the Holy Spirit; that Thou wert born of a pure Virgin; that Thou hast suffered and wert crucified for man's redemption; that Thou wilt come, surrounded by the heavenly hosts, at the last day, to judge the living and the dead; that there shall be no

end to joys experienced by the good, in Thy heavenly kingdom; and no release from sorrow for the wicked in hell; that Thy infallible Catholic Church, governed by lawful pastors, and guided by the Holy Ghost, teaches the same doctrine which Thou hast delivered to Thy apostles, whilst on earth. I give Thee a thousand thanks, for Thy goodness in teaching me these heavenly truths, through the pastors of Thy Holy Catholic Church; and I will persevere in this belief to my very last breath. I will profess Thy holy faith before all men, relying on Thy assistance, internal and external direction. Kings or princes, lords or potentates, governments or principalities, can never dissuade me from the practices of our holy religion, or pervert me from this faith. I would not dread torture or death, if employed to divert me from this purpose; I would earnestly wish for martyrdom, rather than renounce this faith. Confirm, O Lord, this my steadfast purpose, and strengthen my resolutions, in support of my firm convictions. These are now my sentiments, and I hope they shall ever animate my soul. Enlighten

and guide me to the end of my life, that I may eventually, my dearest Saviour, rejoice with Thee in Thy heavenly kingdom, and enjoy everlasting bliss. Amen.

An Act of Hope.

Beg of God grace to persevere in the hope of attaining the happiness of the just in His heavenly kingdom. Desire of Him to admonish you whensoever you are about to despair in or distrust His Divine Providence. However, this hope should not border on presumption, which is dangerous in the opposite extreme. Beseach God, that He would constantly incite your thoughts with a true ambition of attaining something more substantial than the false joys of this world.

SECT. I.

MY gracious God, sustain in my mind the divine virtue of hope. Grant that I may ever continue in expectation of rewards obtained by the just, and persevere in the way of Thy divine precepts. Through the merits of Thy Son, my Saviour, I hope to obtain everything necessary for my salvation; and without His mediation, I could not expect to obtain those dignities, which He has reserved for the elect. He suffered for me and was crucified; He appeased the Divine anger; by His triumphant victory over the

devil, and the prisons of hell, He threw open the gates of heaven for us poor mortals. What a motive of confidence for us to have Him as our Mediator, our for us to have Him as our Mediator, our Judge, and our all! Through Him, and to Him, also, we address our prayers, and He is graciously pleased to hear them. Can we be refused anything when we ask devoutly for it? If we ask, we shall receive; if we seek, we shall find; and if we knock, it shall be opened unto us. These are His own assurances, and daily experience teaches us, that He fulfills not only these but likewise all His other are only these, but likewise all His other pro-Satisfied in this particular, I will grow steadfast in hope, and address Thee with fullest confidence. I expect to arrive safely at the happy end of my earthly pil-grimage, to enjoy Thee hereafter in heaven, to sing forth Thy praises in union with my-riads of blessed spirits. Give me grace, O my God, to hope for such things as are worthy of my expectation; namely, the kingdom of the just, the presence of my Saviour, the everlasting enjoyment of His delights. This shall be my hope and my only consolation while life shall last. Thy favour shall be the summit of my proudest ambition—the highest flight of my ardent desires—the utmost extent of all my solicitude. Grant me this boon, and it is all I desire—this request alone obtained shall make me inconceivably happy.

SECT. II.

This hope I shall breathe forth, as I now do, at my last end. Enliven my now do, at my last end. Enliven my zeal, O God, that I may never cease from expressing my wishes to be with Thee. And may I never unhappily fall into the opposite extremity of despair. Whensoever my spirits languish, do Thou excite me to fervour; and when I might pine in hopelessness, do Thou supply me with courage to face any opposition I may chance to meet. I abhor the very idea of despair, because Thy mercies are great, and I will avoid by every means in my power, even the possibility of yielding to such despondency. I know the sad consequences of falling into it. A soul which has incurred such a misfortune is irrevocably lost, if not following up a prompt cably lost, if not following up a prompt exertion to rouse herself to a sense of her

forlorn condition. I have discovered nothing in this sacrament, which should induce me to despair; on the contrary, as it includes the very essence of Divine charity, I have everything to hope. It is essentially a sacrament, which teaches me to hope, for Thou hast declared, He that eateth My body shall live for ever. If this be so, and I must unhesitatingly believe it on Thy divine word, what comfort should not I feel? What greater hope could I entertain, than that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, so that with Thy single word, my soul shall be healed. Lord, give me Thy grace. Infuse it into my soul, that, like a salutary unction, it may strengthen me in all my combats, which I must expect to wage with my irreconcileable enemy, the devil, during my mortal pilgrimage through this life. I will inevitably fail, unless assisted by Theo and I have Thom wilt never refuse Thee, and I hope Thou wilt never refuse me Thy succour. I was never yet received with indifference, when I fervently applied to Thee, and Thou wilt still continue to be good and kind, never disappointing my reasonable expectations.

SECT. III.

Preserve me, O Lord, from ever despairing of Thy succour. Thou hast never yet given me reason to distrust Thee. Sustain me always with the hope of becoming Thine in heaven, when called out of this life. Keep me from all illusions of the devil, the world, and the flesh; and strengthen me in those resolutions I have now formed of becoming wholly and entirely Thine. These resolutions are firmly implanted within my heart; and all the artifices of my infernal foes are unequal to the task of uprooting Thee. Thus far, I see not why I should despair; but Thou knowest, O God, how frail I am and how easy it is to deceive me. The moment he feels strong, man is puffed up with pride, and fancies himself able to defend his position from any attack. At this moment, however, the adversary generally steps in, and takes possession of a heart unprepared, from which stronghold it becomes no easy matter to dislodge him, and again acquire possession. I will endeavour, O Lord, to profit by my knowledge of this circumstance, and to rely solely upon Thy grace for my preservation. If I take the precaution never to despair, I must also avoid presumption. These are two dangerous rocks, between which I must steer, during my voyage to the port of eternal happiness. If one be destructive, the other is not less dangerous; the middle course seems best to follow, under the auspices of an over-ruling Providence.

SECT. IV.

Presumption betrays many hapless sinners, into an alarming state of apathy. They repose in fancied security, whilst the storm is fast gathering over their heads—they think, in fact, that time will be afforded to regulate the state of their souls at any future juncture, when, in reality, perhaps, they have not very long to live. Preserve me, O my Divine Saviour, from this error, as I desire Thou wouldst from its opposite, and save me for Thy mercies' sake. I trust Thou art ready to hear my repeated supplications, and that Thou wilt not refuse me Thy assis-

tance. Keep me from a miserable dependance on my own spiritual sloth; resting on Thy Divine promises, though very well calculated to comfort a desponding soul, they were never intended by Thee to excite a false presumption and a foolish confidence in Thy boundless mercies. Infuse into my soul grace to avoid all sin, henceforth, but more especially mortal. Calm my soul with confidence in Thee, but remove from it all tendency towards presumption. I fear this overweening confidence, lest it should carry me into a heedless inadvertency, and fatal negligence, in the careless performance of my duty towards Thee. O Lord, through the grace of Thy holy Eucharist, let me keep a constant watchfulness over all stratagems of the enemy; that I may never suffer a constant watchfulness over all stratagems of the enemy; that I may never suffer him to take possession of my heart. Raise up my soul to a devout contemplation of Thy adorable perfections, and enkindle in my heart a perfect desire to accomplish Thy holy will in all things. Preserve me from the designs of my enemies, and conduct my passage to Thee, the desired goal towards which I eagerly speed my destined course. Oh! when shall I have the happiness to close this earthly career, to die in Thee, as I have lived in Thee, after my conversion. I desire to be dissolved, and to repose with Thee. Grant me these my most sincere wishes, O Lord. Give me grace to persevere in such sentiments, and may my mortal career be crowned with the eternal fruition of my dearest Saviour in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

An Act of Charity.

Return God thanks for His boundless love towards you, by giving you Himself, whole and entire, in this venerable Sacrament. Endeavour to make some return of love, however imperfect, on your side; and beseech Him to continue this love to you, as He is now graciously approaching you in the Holy Eucharist. Make known your intention of loving all men for His sake, and also your readiness to embrace any crosses or privations He may be pleased to inflict. Through that heartfelt love you bear Him, pour forth all those expressions of love to His Divine Majesty, which will truly represent your feelings and sentiments. Beg of Him to dissolve your heart in His love, until you enjoy the fruition of His Divine presence.

SECT. I.

WHAT thanks, O Lord, shall I not return Thee: what lips can pour forth those expressions of gratitude with which my soul is now filled? I love

Thee, O God; Thou art indeed worthy of all the love that can be given to Thee. Thou knowest my heart; Thou knowest that it overflows with a sense of gratitude towards Thee, which nothing, I hope, can ever remove. O Lord my God, Thou art all love, and nothing but the greatest affection could induce Thee to regard such a sinful mortal as I am. What shall I proclaim? A great, good, and infinite God, to love a poor wretched sinner, unworthy of any, even the smallest favour! It is absolutely astonishing and really incredible that I could have any pretensions to such favours as Thou hast provided. Thou hast bestowed Thy graces upon one, who is ungrateful, ungenerous, and disaffected. I ought to return this love of Thine by every means in my power. Could I expect or obtain any greater benefit than this treasure of receiving Thy Body and Blood in this adorable sacrament of the Eucharist? It is essentially a sacrament of love, and a centre towards which all the affections of our souls should tend. What! a worm of earth to be enlightened with the presence of God Himself, who is far above all

created things in greatness, excellence, and goodness! Thou givest Thyself altogether to me, without any reservation on Thy part, but whole and entire. Thy very body and blood becomes my nourishment under the eucharistic species.

SECT. II.

What return of love can I ever make Thee? How shall I repay Thee for Thy favours? Thou seest all I have, and what trifles are in my possession. Thou canst have little regard for them. I however offer all I possess to Thee; be pleased to accept this offering. My gifts from Thee are all Thine own; and what return can I really make, if I only give Thee back what is Thine by a thousand titles, or present Thee with what I have received from Thy Providence? Oh that I had anything worth Thy acceptance! O that I could bestow something in return for Thy favours! My desires, alas, are vain! For why could I expect to find anything nearly approaching in excellence and dignity Thy own most precious body and blood? I have nothing to offer Thee,

Lord, but my poor, inconsiderate heart. This present is indeed trifling. But Thou wilt be well pleased even with this humble gift, if tendered with an upright intention. Thou knowest all things-Thou knowest that I love Thee. Thou seest my interior, and Thou art aware of my present sincerity. I wish it were possi-ble to be inflamed with a most ardent desire of becoming Thine, that Thou wouldst consume my very soul with zeal for Thy service. I am in love with Thee; but I wish to prove the sincerity of my affection. My heart is inflamed with an earnest desire of loving Thee, through a most disinterested feeling. Continue, Lord, to regard me with Thy love, and bear with me as Thou hast hitherto done. Thy affection towards me must done. Thy affection towards me must indeed be very great, when Thou hast vouchsafed to give me that most precious nourishment of Thy body and blood, for my support and refreshment. Thou hast left it to me, as Thy last and greatest testament; for the purpose, as Thou hast expressed it, of taking away my sins, and the sins of this world. Keep me still in Thy remembrance, O good Lord, and

continue Thy many favours towards me. Love me with a never-dying affection, and I shall pour forth my soul in praise without ceasing. I will love Thee whilst I live; I will serve Thee with all my strength and ability. I will love all creatures for Thy sake, and my neighbour as myself, for the love of God. I will refer whatever love I bear my fellow-creatures to Thee, the great original, who hast created, redeemed, and saved them. Thou hast done the very same for me. When I admire the grace and beauty, the eloquence or personal accomplishments, the devotion or piety, the strength and vigour, or the elegant shape, bearing and form of those created beings, I cannot but feel a great love and admiration for the Author of all this perfection. From the shadow of perfection, however, I transfer my delight and praise to the very source and essence.

SECT. III.

Thou art wonderful, O Lord, in Thy works. I admire them all, created as they have been by Thee; and whatever

Thou shalt be pleased to send me, I receive in accordance with Thy holy will. Miseries, crosses, temptations, or any other afflictions Thou shalt impose on me, are welcome, provided Thou wilt endue me with strength to bear and love to sustain me against these trials. I accept any punishment most willingly from Thy hands. Afflict me with sickness; I will not repine. If in health I will not be too confident; if poverty be my lot, it will be acceptable; if I obtain riches, they shall not make me proud or presuming. If Thou wilt continue my life, I shall continue my love towards Thee. If You desire to take me away by death, I will rejoice to be removed from the vice and wickedness of this world, for then I shall come to the true enjoyment of Thee in Thy heavenly kingdom. Thus, O Lord, whatsover Thou art pleased to send will be equally acceptable to me. For I know, that Thou art supremely wise and good; and therefore, what Thou wilt ordain must be truly wise and good. Thy Providence would not order it otherwise. I love Thee to such a degree, that no miseries which can be inflicted on me 29

will alter this my resolution. Oh, how can I pour forth in words all I now feel? How can I express the fervour with which I am animated? Flames of Thy love have penetrated through the very marrow of my bones; and I fancy myself wholly consumed by them. O Lord God! Oh, Saviour of man! Oh infinite goodness! Under what obligations shall I not rest, after having received Thy most precious body and blood! I am not able to describe those deep sensations of soul I now feel. Nor is it necessary that I should, for Thou lookest into the interior, and therefore knowest all. Thou who art the searcher of hearts, look to mine, and free it from all affection towards sin, previous to my communion. Remove from it the least sinful desire or dangerous tendency. Purify it by Thy presence, and enlighten it by Thy grace; that both in prosperity and adversity, my mind may be directed towards the fulfilment of Thy wishes. Take my soul to Thy safe keeping, and direct its motions in the way it ought aspire to Thee. Do not allow it to stray from Thee; consume it by the fire of Divine charity, that it may continue to advance in virtue. May it rest in and with Thee, where it shall be truly happy and blessed for all eternity. Amen.

An Act of Humility.

Contrast your own unworthiness, with the influite merits of Christ, who gives Himself to you in the Eucharist, without any reservation. Tremble at the multitude of your sins, which are diametrically opposite to His perfections. Think on the many graces He has bestowed. Humble yourself in spirit, especially when about to receive, and pour out your soul in transports of affection, mingled with a deep sense of your unworthiness.

SECT. L.

A LAS! O Lord, Thou art infinitely great and wise, I am weak and foolish; Thou art mighty and just, I am poor and sinful; Thou art life and light itself, but I am afflicted and covered over with the shadows of death. When Thou hadst delivered Thyself to the Jews, it was to be crucified for me; when Thou hadst suffered, it was intended that I should rejoice, when made a partaker hereafter of Thy heavenly kingdom. Thou hast died upon the cross, that I might live to Thee. I am unworthy, O Lord—I repeat it in deep

humility—I am unworthy of the very smallest of Thy favours. In justice, I ought to be visited with stripes for my rebellion. Thou, O good God, hast been pleased to view my frailty in another light, and certainly not to my prejudice, when I am still allowed to retrace my course. Gifts and graces Thou hast given me in abundance, when I could not expect anything but punishment. I am mortified, O Lord, at the riches of Thy grace being bestowed on a sinful wretched worm—I am confounded at my own worm—I am confounded at my own baseness—I blush at my wayward conduct and proud deportment—I am tantalized with self-reproach. I dare not look upon Thee without feeling an inward humiliation, that reduces me to a state of selfabasement almost bordering upon dejection. This reproach I certainly should consider unbearable, if I were only to rely upon the acts of virtue I have practised; when I know and reflect upon all my heinous crimes and offences, I feel that I should be regarded by Thee, as the most guilty of mortals. In fact, what other person could commit more crimes than I have perpetrated? Who in his sober senses

would lift up the hand of rebellion against a lawful prince or potentate so often and so ruthlessly? A temporal prince would punish his subject with death, who should presume to overrule his laws; yet a great and eternal King, the ruler of this world, forgives such treason and rebellion excited against Him. He dismisses the unfortunate delinquent with pardon, if the culprit only repent of his crimes. this is not all. He still entreats meyes, wretched dupe that I am-He beseeches me to come to the living fountain of mercy and love. He wishes to remove my thirst with large draughts of the saving waters. He invites me to the holy Eucharist, and gives me that very body to eat, that He once gave to His disciples at the last supper. He tells me, that He gives Himself whole and entire, His body and blood, His soul and divinity, All the graces, all the virtues, all the comfort I want, He most willingly affords. leaves nothing undone to promote my happiness, and advantage; whilst on the contrary, I rise up against Him, like a professed enemy.

SECT. II.

When I look back, O Lord, upon my own sinful life and past wickedness, I tremble before Thee, I wonder in fact why I should be spared so long and not be struck dead in the midst of my iniqui-ties. But that I am so well acquainted with Thy gracious condescension towards me, I must indeed be amazed at Thy forbearance. I know that I am above comparison wicked, but then I am also aware that Thou art infinitely good, and wilt pardon when I truly repent of all my past offences. Do not, however, suffer me to be too confident. Such bearing on my part would prove dangerous to me, for it must eventually lead to proud presumption. I am fearful of Thy displeasure, now that I am about to approach Thy sacrament; and I tremble, lest I should be accounted unworthy the honour of admitting my divine Redeemer under my humble roof. Holy fear, tempered with profound respect, is a signal virtue, which Thou hast conferred upon Thy chosen servants. May I therefore hope, that I am actuated by it, and inspired with a reverential awe? Yes, O

Lord, I am all Thine; I am entirely devoted to Thy service, yet with most profound humility. Alas! how have I repuid those graces, which God in His mercy has bestowed upon me? Only by committing sin and unheard of crimes, through my great and manifold offences. Spare me, O Lord; take compassion on my sinful soul. I humble myself to the earth before Thee; raise me therefrom to receive Thee in this Divine Sacrament. I will place Thee within my bosom, though unworthy of being Thy entertainer; the graces of Thy Holy Spirit shall operate within my breast. I shall conceive a sense of my own inability to do anything without Thy assistance. I am nothing, O Lord, but earth and school a rile migraphly warmed a worth ashes; a vile miserable worm; a worthless sinful wretch; and an ungrateful ungenerous creature. Yet, with all those admitted defects, Thou tellest me to have courage and repent, that my sin may be forgiven. O dread Lord and most indulgent Father! what must Thou not offer to the just, if Thou dealest thus bountifully towards a sinner? I will love Thee all the days of my life, my delight in doing Thy will shall ever be on the increase. All my actions shall be performed for the advancement of Thy greater glory, and for the good of my own soul. But strengthen me with Thy grace, to fulfil these my resolutions, and I shall continue firm in their observance. May endless bliss, in the happy realms above, crown all my labours. Amen.

An Act of Adoration.

Recall to mind frequently the great benefit you are about to receive, in being permitted to partake of Holy Communion, and adore the Almighty hidden under these sacramental veils. Let all the praise and adoration, due to such a bountiful Lord, be given. Beseech of Him, that you may be found clothed with the wedding garment, when you approach the Holy Eucharist. Give Him thanks and praises for all His benefits to you, and particularly for this special pledge of His love and confidence.

SECT. I.

ADORE and worship Thee, O Saviour of men; I praise Thee and give Thee thanks; I call upon Thy holy name, and proclaim the multitude of Thy mercies. Thou art all-powerful, great, good and wise; Thou art really bounteous and liberal; Thou art truly munificent and

generous; Thou art most merciful and clement; Thou art ever great and glorious. Towards me, who have so often experienced Thy bounty and clemency Thou art indeed an indulgent Father, a most watchful guardian, a faithful protector, a kind instructor, and a merciful God. Thou takest all possible care of me, and wilt not allow me to stray from Thee, nor relax in my duty, unless when I totally forget the great end of my creation. Thou hast urged me to do Thy holy will by stern and wholesome threats;
Thou hast encouraged me to the performance of my duty by fair and enticing promises; Thou drawest me towards Thyself by a sort of pious instinct and emulation; Thou hast even received me, when, having strayed from the path of Thy commandments, I again retrace my steps and turn towards Thee. Thou art a God most worthy of all praise and adoration; an infinite, a glorious, and a merciful Creator. Need I seek further for a proof of Thy goodness, than that Thou shouldst give Thy adorable body and blood to us, poor, ignorant, benighted mortals, who are altogether unworthy of

such a benefit? Everlasting praise and adoration be given Thy holy name, O God, in every clime and country, wherein Thou art worshipped! May all Christians implore Thy succour to obtain relief in their distress. May all infidels, heretics, and schismatics be converted to Thee. and repose in the bosom of Thy holy Catholic Church. O that I could make such persons sensible of the peace of mind which I now enjoy! O that they could partake of this holy Eucharist, as I am about to do. or be filled with delight in being permitted to entertain so great and so distinguished a guest! I cannot help revolving in mind, O Lord, the great honour I have conferred on me, when going to sit at Thy holy table. Every time I think on this Thy favour, I am transported with joy, and overpowered with the excess of my emotions. Why dost Thou delay so long in coming to visit me through this holy sacrament? Make haste, O Lord, and give me Thy precious body and blood, to be my spiritual food.

SECT. II.

I adore Thee, though hidden from my senses, for I am certain, that Thou art really present under the form of bread, whole and entire, and that Thy divinity accompanies here Thy real presence. The more mysterious Thou art, the more worthy of my admiration; and therefore, the more deserving of my profound adoration. I worship Thee; and shall ever continue to serve Thee, whilst I am left upon this earth. I will never cease to call upon Thy holy name. For giving me Thy blessed body, I shall ever praise and worship Thee, who art the true living bread, coming down from heaven. O, let Thy name be praised, now and for evermore. Let all names be as nothing, before the adorable name of our Lord Jesus Christ. For my part, I will praise and love Thee whilst I live. Do Thou attend to my supplications, and hear my prayers. I now entreat of Thee, that Thou wouldst clothe me with the wedding garment, and make me presentable in approaching to Thy sacred banquet. Divest me of any slovenliness or disorder, that would seem to disqualify

me from becoming one of Thy favoured guests. Thou art my guest, and I am Thine. When I approach Thy table, do Thou make me worthy to partake of this heavenly repast; and when Thou hast visited me, I will prepare an apartment, according to the best of my ability. Cover me with the wedding garment now, that I may appear before Thee in suitable raiment, and not disgrace myself in presence of a bountiful entertainer. Along with all Thy other benefits, grant me this request, that the measure of thy favours to me may be full. I thank Thee, O Lord, for inviting so poor and despicable a wretch as I am, to this holy sacrament. I adore Thee, for this and for every other benefit lavished on me; and I hope that Thou wilt still continue to honour me with Thy protection. Grant my request, O my God, although it is Thy poor and despicable servant that entreats Thee. May Thy goodness to me increase with my wants, and may Thy mercies atone for my past miserable follies. Amen.

A PRAYER WHICH MAY BE REPEATED OFTEN BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION.

A S warm and sincere, but more humble and diffident than Thy apostle, I come now, O my God, to assure Thee of my lasting attachment. Receive the offering I make Thee, of all I possess in this world. Woe be to me, were I to enjoy any supposed advantage, that I would not instantly sacrifice, at the very first intimation of Thy will! Yes, were it even my own life, it is entirely Thine; dispose of it as Thou mayest think proper. I offer myself entirely to Thee: my employments, my talents, and all the powers and faculties of my soul and body, that they may always tend to Thy greater honour and glory. How could I refuse my life to Thee, when Thou hast generously given Thy own to redeem me from eternal death? After having loved me even to this degree, Thou hast besides left me in Holy Communion, a sensible pledge of Thy enduring affection! What more couldst Thou possibly do for me! How ungrateful should I prove, if such

astonishing marks of tenderness be not able most sensibly to affect me! The very damned are less culpable than I am; for if they do not love Thee, they at least bitterly repent their opportunities now lost irrevocably. It is because they cannot, by possibility, love Thee through any expectation of future reward, nor dost Thou require it from them. But I can yet love Thee; everything induces me to secure Thy favour and friendship; and Thou art even mercifully pleased to desire I should deserve Thy rewards. O, Thou Eternal Beauty, why have I so late begun to love Thee? O, Divine Love! the excellence of which I cannot sufficiently acknowledge! I consider as completely lost to me all those moments of my life, which I have not entirely consecrated to Thee. Accept, at least, the poor remainder of my life. If I cannot love Thee as much as I would wish, as much as Thou hast loved me. as much as Thou has deserved, may I at least love Thee, so far as I am able. O, angels of heaven! O, Immaculate Mother of my God! and all ye holy saints, intercede for me now, and procure for me by your prayers a new change of heart! Have I,

alas! but one heart, and that so small, or already so much profaned by the love of creatures! Diminish, if Thou art pleased, O my God, all other temporal advantages and comforts; but let me have more of this divine charity. I trust, O my God, that Thou art now lighting up within me this sacred fire, and that I could answer Thee with as much confidence as St. Peter did: Yes, Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee. I love Thee with all my heart, and for Thy sake alone. I love Thee without reserve. and with a most firm resolution, never to love or prefer anything before Thee. I am satisfied to find bitterness, affliction, and disgust, in every other attachment, that I may be happily compelled to rest for ever in Thee. O, make this love solid, effectual, ardent, and persevering; and if Thou only dwell in me for a few moments, leave such an indelible impression, that the effects of Thy divine presence may remain for ever irradiating my soul and traced upon my heart. "I to my beloved, and my beloved to me." (Cant. vi. 2.) "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." (John xxi. 16.)

ON THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

This adorable sacrifice of the mass is undoubtedly the greatest, most sublime, and most acceptable homage, which man can offer to the Almighty. Need we wonder at this, when it is His only Son Jesus Christ, we present in atonement, and in propitiation for our sins? St. Chrysostom tells us, the angels are so well acquainted with the efficacy of mass, that they are in expectation until it begins, judging its celebration the most favourable opportunity presented to obtain graces from Almighty God. We should always assist at mass, with the greatest devotion and reverence, and then especially remove our thoughts from worldly cares and concerns. We should give ourselves entirely to God, whilst we are in His holy temple, and should wholly subject our intentions to His will. St. Gregory says, that He must then be our victim indeed, when we sacrifice ourselves to Him.

Long before the appearance of Christ on earth, sacrifices were offered to God by

the patriarchs and prophets. "Manna was formerly given as a figure," says Origen, "but now the flesh and blood of the Son of God are specifically given, and become real food." All these representations and types were only obscure images of that great sacrifice offered by our Saviour on the cross. The type was intended to foreshadow the reality. The blood of sheep and oxen gave place to the blood of our Divine Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it was who instituted this holy sacrifice at His who instituted this holy sacrince at His last supper, that He might leave it as the last and greatest pledge of His love. This is the sacrifice of which the Prophet Malachy said, "In every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation." (Mal. i. 11.) He foretold that it should be offered, from the printing of the grap to the graph development. rising of the sun to the going down thereof, in the churches of the Gentiles. This sacrifice of the mass is but a representation of that sacrifice, once offered on Mount Calvary; but the former is repeated in an unbloody manner, through the ministry of the priest on our altars.

To assist properly at Mass, the follow-

ing rules should be observed by him, who

approaches with the faithful, and especially to participate in this august sacrifice, by the devout reception of Holy Communion.

1. When you are going to hear mass, let your first endeavour be piously to recollect yourself as you best can, by removing all your wandering thoughts, thus withdrawing your mind from all other business and earthly concerns. Imagine you hear within, that sweet voice of your Saviour, inviting you to come to His sacrifice, in order to unite yourself intimately with Him. intimately with Him.

2. On your way to the church or chapel, 2. On your way to the church or chapel, place yourself in spirit with the Blessed Virgin, and those pious women going to Mount Calvary, intending to be present at the passion and death of our Lord. Represent your Saviour as carrying His cross before you, to be immolated thereon for your sins. Bewail in great agony of spirit the sins you have committed, with those of other men, as the sole cause of all His sufferings.

3. When you enter the church of

3. When you enter the church or chapel, humble yourself profoundly in the presence of God. If the Blessed Sacrament be kept there, adore your Saviour,

on bended knees. When taking the holy water, make the sign of the cross on yourself. Beg pardon for your sins. Humbly crave, that you may be washed and cleansed from them, by the precious blood of the Lamb of God.

4. Having knelt down, represent to yourself, by a lively act of faith, the majesty of God. Humbly beg His mercy and grace, that you may assist at this august sacrifice, in the manner most ad-

vantageous to vou.

vantageous to you.

5. Propose to yourself some good intention, for which you desire to offer up this great sacrifice to God, by the hands of His priest. As, for instance: 1. To commemorate and spiritually apply the death and passion, resurrection and ascension, of the Son of God. 2. To render the Divine Mystery, with and through Jesus Christ, a sovereign homage of adoration, glory, and praise. 3. To give Jesus Christ thanks for your redemption, and for all other benefits bestowed on you, as also on the whole Church, militant, sufalso on the whole Church, militant, suffering, and triumphant. 4. Especially regard Jesus Christ, throughout the dif-ferent stages of His Sacred Humanity. 5.

For obtaining mercy and pardon of your sins, and those of all the faithful, through the blood of Jesus Christ. 6. For obtaining all graces and blessings on yourself and on all Christians. 7. Especially apply this holy sacrifice, for the repose of suffering souls in purgatory.

6. Unite yourself to Jesus Christ, the invisible priest, in and through this sacrifice. Join your adoration, prayer, and thanksgiving with His minister at the altar. Make a total offering of your soul and body to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in union with that oblation of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

When you go into the church, say:

1. O Lord, in the multitude of Thy tender mercies, I will enter Thy house; I will adore Thee in Thy holy temple, and humbly confess Thy name.

When you take the holy water, say:

2. Sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed; wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.

The following prayers are usually recited before Mass, on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation. They always form a suitable preparation for assisting devoutly at this adorable sacrifice.

ACTS OF CONTRITION, FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY.

A Prayer before the Acts.

ALMIGHTY and Eternal God, grant unto us an increase of faith, hope, and charity; and that we may obtain what Thou hast promised, make us to love and practise what Thou commandest, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

An Act of Contrition.

MY God! I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee; and I detest my sins most sincerely, because they displease Thee, my God, who art so deserving of all my love, for Thy infinite goodness and most amiable perfections. And I firmly purpose, by Thy holy grace, never more to offend Thee.

An Act of Faith.

O MY God! I firmly believe that Thou art one only God, the Creator and Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, infinitely great and infinitely good; I firmly

believe that in Thee, one only God, there are Three Divine Persons, really distinct and equal in all things, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. I firmly believe that Jesus Christ, God the Son, became man; that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and was born of the Virgin Mary; that He suffered and died on the cross to redeem and save us; that He arose the third day from the dead; that He ascended into heaven; that He · will come at the end of the world to judge mankind; that He will reward the good with eternal happiness, and condemn the wicked to the everlasting pains of hell. believe these, and all other articles, which the Holy Roman Catholic Church proposes to our belief; because Thou, my God, the infallible Truth, hast revealed them, and Thou hast commanded us "to hear the Church, which is the Pillar and the Ground of Truth." In this faith, I am firmly resolved, by Thy holy grace, to live and die.

An Act of Hope.

O MY God! who hast graciously promised every blessing, even heaven

itself, through Jesus Christ, to those who keep Thy commandments, relying on Thy infinite power, goodness, and mercy, and confiding in Thy sacred promises, to which Thou art always faithful, I confidently hope to obtain pardon of all my sins; grace to serve Thee faithfully in this life, by doing the good works Thou hast commanded, and which, with Thy assistance, I now purpose to perform; and eternal happiness in the next, through my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

An Act of Charity.

MY God! I love Thee with my whole heart and soul, and above all things, because Thou art infinitely good and perfect, and most worthy of all my love; and for Thy sake I love my neighbour as myself. Mercifully grant, O my God, that having loved Thee on earth, I may love and enjoy Thee for ever in heaven.

A Prayer before Mass.

MERCIFUL Father! who didst so love the world as to give up for our redemption Thy beloved Son; who, in

obedience to Thee, and for us sinners, humbled Himself even unto the death of the cross, and who continues to offer Himself daily by the ministry of His priests, for the living and the dead. We humbly beseech Thee, that penetrated with a lively faith, we may always assist, with the utmost devotion and reverence, at the oblation of His most precious Body and Blood, which is made at Mass, and thereby be made partakers of the sacrifice, which He consummated on Calvary.

In union with Thy Holy Church and its ministers, and invoking the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and all the angels and saints, we now offer the adorable sacrifice of the Mass to Thy honour and glory, to acknowledge Thy infinite perfections, Thy supreme dominion over all Thy creatures, our entire subjection to Thee, and total dependance on Thy gracious providence, and in thanksgiving for all Thy benefits, and for the remission of our sins.

We offer it, for the propagation of the Catholic faith, for our most Holy Father the Pope, for our Archbishop, (or Bishop), and for all the pastors and clergy of Thy Holy Church, that they may direct the faithful in the way of salvation; for the Queen, and for all that are in high station; that we may lead a quiet and holy life; for peace and good will among all states and people; for the necessities of mankind, and particularly for the congregation here present, to obtain all blessings we stand in need of in this life, everlasting happiness in the next, and eternal rest to

the faithful departed.

And as Jesus Christ so ordained, when He instituted at His last supper, this wonderful mystery of His power, wisdom, and goodness; we offer the Mass in grateful remembrance of all He has done and suffered for the love of us, making special commemoration of His bitter Passion and Death, and of His glorious Resurrection and Ascension into heaven. Vouchsafe, O Almighty and Eternal God, (for to Thee alone so great a sacrifice is due,) graciously to accept of it, for these and all other purposes, agreeable to Thy holy will. And to render it the more pleasing, we offer it to Thee, through the same Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour, our High Priest and Victim; and in the

name of the most Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to whom be honour, praise, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Explanation of the Liturgy, Ceremonies, and Objects seen at Mass.

The priest's vestments correspond with those worn by Christ in the several stages of His Passion. The amict, or linen veil, represents that blind which the Jews put upon the face of Christ, when they struck Him. The alb, that white garment with which Herod invested Him. The girdle, stole, and maniple, represent those cords which bound Him. The upper vestment typifies that purple garment and seamless coat, with which He was clad. The altar-stone and crucifix signify Calvary and the cross on which our Saviour was crucified. The other cloths on the altar, such as the corporal and pall, bring to our minds that linen in which His blessed body was shrouded. The candles represent that light, which the death of our Blessed Redeemer brought upon this world.

Although the Nature and object of the Holy Sasrifice of Mass are in substance identical, wherever it may be offered in the Church; yet many different Masses are in use, such as those called Solemn and daily, public and private, general and particular, ferial and votive, Masses peculiar to the season and to saints, Masses for the living and the dead, &c. Various rites and liturgies have also prevailed and still continue, with regard to those several celebrations, at different times and in separate places. The chalice and patena are consecrated, as being more immediately in contact with the Eucharistic species; but other church vessels and objects, which remotely appertain to the Holy Sacrifice, are not consecrated. The use of thuribles and incense is most ancient during the Sacred Solemnities; and these typify that sweet ascent

of prayer and praise, which reaches the throne of God. The vases, flowers, relics of saints, and altar ornaments have special reference to a decency and respect due to that Sacred table, on which the body and blood of Christ are consecrated, and to that place where the remains of His chosen servants are preserved. Images and pictures of Christ and His saints are also placed within the Church, to fix our attention on pious subjects, and to restrain within proper bounds our wandering imaginations. Choral and vocal music has been practised in the celebration of Divine services from the Apostolic period; and in course of time, instrumental music was introduced, to lend greater solemnity and devotional feeling to their performance.

PRAYERS FOR A COMMUNICANT AT MASS.

At the beginning of Mass.

The preparatory psalm and prayers should remind us that our Lord Jesus Christ, in the mystery of His Incarnation, manifested a great desire and readiness to begin the work of man's redemption. With religious fervour, profound humility, and praise for all God's benefits towards us, must we offer the homage of our hearts.

BEHOLD, O Lord, I come to Thee, most desirous to be a partaker of

*The foregoing matters, as also particular parts of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass, have been most learnedly and diffusely explained by the erudite Cardinal Bona, in his critical and devotional works, De Sacrificio Missac Tractatus Asceticus, and in his treatise, Rerum Liturgicarum Libri Duo. In like manner, Pope Benedict XIV, has well and clearly expounded their mystical meaning in his work, De Sacrificio Missac. See also, Le Brun, Explication de la Messe.

Thy gifts, and joyfully to sit down at Thy holy banquet, which Thou, O God, hast prepared in the abundance of Thy sweetness, for poor and weak mortals. Behold, in Thee do I find everything I can or ought to desire. Thou art my Protector and my Redeemer; my hope and my strength; my comforter and my delight. Cheer, therefore, the soul of Thy servant on this day, because, O Lord Jesus, I have lifted up my eyes to Thee. I now desire to receive Thee with devotion and reverence. I long to bring Thee into my house, that I may deserve Thy blessing, like Zachæus, and be numbered amongst the children of Abraham. My soul is impatient to be refreshed with Thy sacred body, and my heart is filled with an earnest desire to be united with Thee!

At the Confiteor.

The Confiteer puts us in mind of our many faults, and warns us to prepare ourselves by inward sorrow for the celebration of this holy sacrifice, at which we are called upon to assist.

O JESUS, Saviour of the world, who hast come hither to save sinners, and who hast kindly invited them to refresh-

ment and rest, behold a poor wretch, who dares approach Thee, grieved for his sins, and trusting in Thy bountiful redemption. I come to Thee, as a strayed sheep, who hath long wandered from the Shepherd; for Thou hast laid down Thy life for Thy flock, and art willing to save even that, which without Thy watchful care would have inevitably perished. I come to Thee, disabled with many wounds, infected with spiritual disorders; but Thou, O Lord, if Thou wilt, canst heal me and cleanse me from all iniquities. Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. (Here strike your breast thrice.) Thou art indeed that good Samaritan, the true Physician of souls, who Thyself hast carried our infirmities; who hast prepared for us the sacred banquet of Thy own precious body and blood. Have mercy on me, therefore, O Lord, and heal my soul, because I have sinned against Thee; look on the offering I make Thee, a grieved spirit a contrite and humble heart, which I know Thou wilt not despise. O, break the heavy bonds of past sin, and let me now receive Thee worthilv.

At the Introit.

We begin these adorable mysteries by invoking, in form of a Doxology, the Three Divine Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, and by proclaiming their eternal generation, power, and glory.

OW boundless, O Lord, was Thy love, to bestow Thyself on us, in this adorable Sacrament! Must not the angels be astonished at this prodigy! Must they not become almost envious of the favours bestowed on mankind! then is man, that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou shouldst visit him! What dost Thou see in Thy poor servant, that would induce Thee to come in this manner and invite him to sit at Thy holy table? But Thy delight is to be with the children of men: Thou art prodigal of favours, it would seem, because of our poverty. O, give me grace to sigh after Thee, and with impatience to long for Thy approach!

At the Kyrie Eleison.

By the frequent repetition of this prayer, we acknowledge our total dependance on God, and recognize the efficacy of perseverance in our petitions for the reception of His graces. ORD, have mercy on us. (three times.)
Christ, have mercy on us. (three times.)

Lord, have mercy on us. (three times.)

At the Gloria in Excelsis Deo.

The Gloria in excelsis Deo denotes that hymn of praise which the angels sung at the birth of Christ. We are of necessity lost in admiration, when thus permitted, whilst exiles on earth, to join with the canticles of angels in heaven. Faith, hope, charity, praise, adoration and humble supplication are united in this sublime and joyous canticle of the Church.

O LORD, my God, how wonderful is Thy Name, through the whole world! Thou art the great Creator, the heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory! Angels praise Thee! the cherubim and seraphim adore Thee! Dominations and powers tremble in Thy presence! What then is man, that Thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that Thou wouldst visit him in this sacrament! Lord! I am not worthy that Thou come under my roof; say only the word, and my soul shall be healed. Thou who takest away the sins of the world, O Divine Jesus, and who sittest at the right hand of Thy Eternal Father, hear us, and have

mercy on us. Thou, most holy and most exalted, be ever blessed and adored, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, on earth and in heaven. Amen.

At the Collects.

The Collects coincide with the prayers of Christ in the temple, and when He went to Jerusalem, in order to adore His Father, with the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, accompanying Him. We should also regard them as impetratory prayers, whereby the priest becomes a mediator before God for the sins of mankind.

FIND not words to express my feelings of awe and reverence; I can only declare my own utter unworthiness, and Thy unspeakable goodness. This I acknowledge with most sincere humility. Thou knowest all my wants, and Thou canst relieve them. Thou art willing to befriend a poor outcast, and for this reason Thou hast here invited me to partake of Thy sacred body. Behold, I come on Thy invitation; I present myself to Thee, with all my wants, my misery, and blindness. I trust Thou wilt comfort, enlighten, and effect a true change of heart and disposition. I hope for this without fear of disappointment, when humbly and contritely, I implore Thy grace and mercy.

Thou art the Lord of my heart, and I surrender it entirely to Thy safe keeping!

At the Epistle.

The Epistle signifies the preaching of St. John in the desert, and likewise the teaching of Christ's apostles. We should learn from this instruction lessons of piety and morality to guide our steps in the way of salvation.

BLESSED, O Lord, is that man who puts his trust in Thee, for Thou art the Fountain of goodness, the Author of grace, and Thou art ready to give Thyself for our sake in this divine sacrament. Be not sad, therefore, O my soul, nor let anything now disturb Thee! Confidently, but humbly, approach, O sinner, to thy God, for He is sweet, and patient, and merciful, towards all who invoke Him. He alone can give all things, because He alone is omnipotent. He is willing to give all things, because His goodness is O God, my firm hope, for infinite. this doth my heart rejoice, because in the sacrament of Thy love Thou art really present. Giving us here Thyself, Thou wilt not refuse us any favour. In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me not be confounded for ever.

31

At the Gradual or Tract.

The Gradual or Tract means that penance which ensued amongst the people, after the preaching of St. John the Baptist, and should warn us to bring forth worthy fruits of repentance.

"THE eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord, and Thou givest them meat in due season. Thou openest Thy hand, and fillest with blessing every living creature." (Ps. cxliv. 15, 16.) Thou hast said, O Divine Jesus, "My flesh is meat indeed: and My blood is drink indeed: he that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him." (John vi. 56, 57.)

At the Gospel.

The Gospel, in like manner, denotes the preaching of Jesus Christ, and contains the record of His wonderful life, miracles and teaching, whilst on earth. We should emisder these narratives as written specially for our instruction, edification, and example.

O IVE me Thyself, O Lord, Thou art all sufficient; for without Thee there is no other comfort. I cannot live removed from Thy presence; nor can I refuse a return for Thy visits. Therefore, I must have frequent access, and receive Thee with devotion and humility, Thou

great restorer of my spiritual health. I should faint on the way for want of heavenly food, did I not often receive Holy Communion. For Thou, O most compassionate Jesus, when Thou wert preaching to the people, and healing their distempers, hast also said: I will not send them home fasting, lest they should faint on the way. Take now the same merciful view in my case. Thou hast condescended to leave us a legacy of Thyself in this adorable sacrament, for the comfort of all Thy faithful. Thou art the sweet refreshment of our souls, and he who receives Thee worthily, shall become a partaker and heir of eternal glory. It is indeed quite necessary for me, who so often falls into sin, and grows so slothful and faint, that I be quickened, cleansed, and inflamed by frequent prayers and preparation for a reception of Thy sacred body. I should fear, also, by long absti-nence from this holy banquet, lest I relax in my pious purposes and practices.

At the Credo.

The Credo betokens that precious fruit and abundant harvest which followed the labours of our Lord Jesus Christ, and embodies the Articles of our Faith, as included in the Apostles' Creed. Thus should our minds be fortified and prepared by a profession of our belief in the great moving truths of religion, previous to the consummation of this most holy sacrifice of the Mass.

THE same Divine Word that said, "Let there be light, and light was made," proclaims the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in this holy Sacrament. I submit my senses and reason to that Divine authority. O, my Saviour, I praise and glorify Thy infinite goodness, which hath prepared this heavenly banquet for the food and nourishment of my soul. Blessed be Thy Name for ever! Accept my homage; receive, O my God, my most heartfelt thanks. But, what am I, that Thou shouldst work such wonders for my sake? How shall such a vile sinner, as I am, presume to approach Thee, who art the inexhaustible source of infinite purity and sanctity? How shall I venture to lift up my eyes to heaven, much less to receive Thee within my breast? I tremble at the sentence of Thy apostle: "Whosoever shall eat this

bread, or drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of our Lord," (1 Cor. xi. 27.) For I acknowledge myself to be nothing but dust and ashes, a poor miserable worm of the earth, subject to many vices, and void of any virtue or merit. Alas! my life has tended to little that is good, but only to one course of sin and misery. I have nothing to confide in but God's boundless mercy; nor should I ever presume to approach this sacred table, and partake of the bread of angels, were I not encouraged by His infinite goodness, and excited by His own most pressing invitations.

At the Oblations.

The Offertory represents the fervent offering of Jesus to His Father, by suffering death for us, and therefore we should be ready to make any sacrifice of ourselves to return Him love for love.

CHRIST JESUS, true God and true Man, commensurate in perfection, power, and majesty, with Thy Eternal Father! I believe, with a firm faith, that Thou art truly and really present in this adorable sacrament; for Thou, who

art truth itself, hast said, This is My Body. What can be more certain than the declaration of God Himself! I believe, O Lord, do Thou increase my faith! Receive this Immaculate Host and this chalice of salvation, offered for our innumerable sins, for the living and the dead. May they truly propitiate Thy Divine clemency, on behalf of our immortal souls. Amen.

When the Priest inclines before the Altar.

Bend in humble supplication and thanksgiving, that the Almighty for love of His creatures has deigned to hide His majesty under these species of bread and wine.

HUMBLE and contrite, O Lord, may our hearts be also pure and holy in Thy sight, that as a sweet incense our prayer and praise may ascend with this most acceptable sacrifice of the spotless Victim immolated for our sins.

At the Lavabo.

Whilst the Priest washes his fingers, beg of God to cleanse your soul, not only from great sins, but even from venial offences, that you may be pure and clean in His sight.

THE inclinations of man are bent upon evil from his infancy, and unless a

wholesome remedy be supplied, he quickly falls into serious disorders. Holy Communion, I know, often checks that tendency. and strengthens us in our desires of doing good. If now that I communicate, I am frequently negligent or lukewarm, what would become of me, if I applied not this remedy, and great restorative to support and strengthen me? And though I be not prepared, nor sufficiently well disposed, to receive every day, I will endeavour, notwithstanding, to partake of these divine mysteries at convenient times, and dispose myself for so great a favour. One of the chiefest comforts to a faithful soul, is having frequent recourse to this most sacred table, and receiving its hallowed bread with most devout and ardent affection.

At the Orate Fratres.

The Orate Fratres and secret prayers mean the retreat of our Saviour in the desert, where He held private conferences with His disciples regarding His forthcoming death. These prayers signify the efficacy of meditation, retirement, and the sweetness of interior recollection.

MAY our gracious Lord receive this Holy Sacrifice from us here assisting,

to the praise and glory of His adorable name, for our benefit, and for that of the universal Church. Amen.

At the Secret Prayer.

Beg from God the grace of attaining to a high degree of spirituality and perfection.

MOST mercifully hear our prayers, dearest Lord, and deign to accept from us the profound homage of our hearts, that being purified from earthly affections, they may seek repose in Thy delights, through our Divine Saviour and the Holy Ghost, who with the Eternal Father, live and reign, world without end. Amen.

At the Preface.

The Preface signifies Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and the hosannas of the multitude. Whilat joining in their acclamations of triumph, let us be careful to guard against the inconstancy of the Jews.

WONDERFUL condescension of Thy tenderness for us, Lord God, the Creator and Redeemer of this world, that Thou shouldst vouchsafe to come into my poor soul, and with Thy divine presence purify it from previous sing. Oh, happy

child of grace, O blessed soul, that hath deserved devoutly to receive the Lord, and who by receiving Him, becomes filled with spiritual joy! How great a Lord doth not man entertain! What a welcome guest! What a noble companion! What a faithful friend! What a loving spouse doth he not embrace! Noble and beautiful, and beloved, above all that is or can be desirable on earth. Tell me no more of earthly delights and human joys. What are they, compared with Thee. O my most sweet and lovely Jesus! All the praise and beauty they can claim must be derived from Thee. The creature can never be compared to the Creator, whose wisdom and power are without measure or limit. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth! Blessed is He who cometh in the name of our Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

At the Canon.

The Canon means His prayer in the garden, the agony and bloody sweat, with the desertion of His disciples. The sundry crosses made signify the many torments Christ endured. We offer the prayers in silence to signify that gravity and profound recollection, which are required in thought and deportment, before the priest pronounces the words of consecration.

IT is in Thy mercy, O Lord, which is above all Thy works, that I put my whole trust; and since Thou art pleased to call me to this divine banquet, behold I come to it like Magdalen, to be happily united to Thee, and to lay down all my sins at Thy feet, in order that they may be cancelled by Thy most precious blood. I come to commemorate the great atoning sacrifice on Mount Calvary, as Thou Thy-self hast ordained. I come, as one sick, to the Physician of Life; as one blind to the light of Eternal glory; as one poor, needy, and distressed, to the King of heaven and earth. I expose all my wounds before Thee, that they may be healed. To Thee I fly for protection, knowing that Thou wilt be a Saviour, and that Thou wilt wash away every sin that may defile me.

At the Commemoration of the Living.

Here should we recollect, not alone our own spiritual necessities, but likewise those of our living relatives, friends and neighbours, especially persons for whom gratitude and charity require our special suffrages.

WHAT I ask for myself, I do likewise, O my God, most earnestly entreat

for all the faithful; and in particular for my benefactors, my kindred, my friends, and even for my enemies, if I should have anv. Give to each one of Thy creatures all necessary graces, and most particularly to those persons, for whom I am bound to pray, N. N. (here name them.) Let men perfectly know, and constantly do Thy will in all things. Thou hast promised to be with Thy Church, and Thou wilt always be with her, as Thou hast declared to the end of this world. Watch over her interests, guide and preserve her children in peace and unity. Provide her with bishops and pastors, according to Thine own heart. Preserve and sanctify those Thou hast given her. By the gifts of Thy Holy Spirit, make them worthy ministers of the New Covenant. Bless the just with perseverance in good, and with an increase of Thy love and grace. Convert heretics and sinners, pagans, infidels, and all impious persons. Comfort the afflicted and distressed. Through the merits and intercession of Thy glorious and immaculate Virgin Mother, of Thy apostles, martyrs, and other saints, may we experience Thy protection and assistance, my sweet Jesus. Yes, O my God, I dare to ask Thee now for any lawful request. I desire to pray for all persons whatsoever, that they may experience the sweetness of Thy delights, now that Thou art to make Thyself altogether mine in this holy Communion.

Before the Consecration.

Prepare your soul for devout adoration, at the great change about to take place, whilst the priest pronounces words of consecration over the eucharistic species.

O HOLY BREAD, strengthening the soul of man, whoever eateth Thee, shall live for ever! He who doth not approach this sacred banquet cannot have that life. How delightful are Thy dwellings, O Lord! My soul sighs for Thy coming in the adorable Sacrament, where Thou dost bestow that sacred bread, and doth give delicious food to those who fear Thee. Incline Thine ear, and graciously grant my petition; because I am wretched and poor, satisfy my hunger. Support me with this precious nourishment, that having travelled through the desert of this world, I may come to the heavenly Jeru-

salem. O, my God, place me at Thy holy table, that I may be filled with the plenty of Thy house. Amen.

At the Consecration.

The elevation of the host and chalice represents the lifting up of Christ upon the cross. This raising of the Host means the separation of Christ's spirit from His body; and this raising of the chalice signifies the blood parted from His veins.

DO THOU, O God, bless, approve, ratify, and accept this Holy Oblation, that it may become for us the Body and Blood of Thy most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

WHO the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and with eyes lifted up towards heaven, giving thanks to Thee, O God, His Almighty Father, He blessed it, broke it, and gave to His disciples, saying, Take and eat ye all of this, For this is My Body.

Here most profoundly adore the sacred Host, whilst the priest genuficets and afterwards elevates it, in sight of all the people.

IN LIKE manner, after He had supped, taking this excellent chalice into His

holy and venerable hands, also giving Thee thanks, He blessed it and gave it to His disciples, saying, Take and drink ye all of this, For this is the Chalice of My Blood, of the New and ETERNAL TESTAMENT: THE MYSTERY OF FAITH: WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU, AND FOR MANY, TO THE REMISSION OF SINS.

Here again most profoundly adore, whilst the priest genufiects, and afterwards elevates the sacred chalice in sight of the congregation.

After the Consecration.

Regard the holy angels of God as now present to the consummation of this august mystery; for when Jesus Christ is really and truly present there must be assembled the heavenly choirs. Unite with them in transports of love and humble adoration, whilst commemorating the passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Divine Saviour.

REMOVE my blindness, relieve my necessities, clothe me with Thy grace, that I may receive the adorable sacrament of Thy body and blood, with such reverence and humility, such contrition and devotion, such purity and faith, as may redound to Thy honour and glory, and procure the salvation of my own soul. I am not worthy, O Lord, to receive Thee; alas! I am not deserving the least of Thy

favours: but Thou canst. if Thou wilt. prepare me for a reception of Thy choicest Say but the word, then, and my soul shall be healed. Thou hast. heretofore, said to the leper in the Gospel, "I am willing, be Thou healed:" and he was immediately cured of his disease. My soul is covered with an universal leprosy. heal me, then, O my dearest Saviour, in like manner, cleanse my soul from its stains, remove from it all guilt, extinguish in it the fire of concupiscence and every evil disposition; adorn it with the necessary virtues, and make it as far as possible a suitable abode for Thy corporal presence. May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen.

At the Commemoration of the Dead.

This great impetratory sacrifice being most efficacious in procuring rest for the faithful souls departed, take such an opportunity to pray for your deceased relatives, benefactors, friends, and even those who have been the occasion of loss or crosses to you during life. Also, do not forget those recently dead, or specially recommended to your prayers, as likewise those who have none to pray for them.

MOST sweet Saviour, Jesus Christ! how great is the power of that love

which brought Thee from the bosom of Thy Eternal Father, into this valley of tears, to assume the nature of man, to take upon Thyself our infirmities, to suffer numberless injuries, and to die upon the cross for us sinners, and for our salvation. Remember also, my dearest Lord, the necessities of Thy faithful departed, who have been removed from this scene of earthly conflict, and who yet may be obliged to suffer for stains of sin contracted by them during life. Be merciful to the souls of N. N. (here name the persons for whom you intend to pray.)

At the Nobis quoque peccatoribus.

' Here humbly conceive a great sorrow for all your past sins.

THOU mightest have condemned, but Thou hadst rather save me. I was the criminal, but Thou wouldst bear the punishment. O, my God, my strength, my refuge, my deliverer! whose delight is to be with the children of men, who doth dwell here upon our altars, in so endearing a manner! What thanks shall I give? What return of love shall I make

to Thee? I desire to rejoice with Thee for ever, in company with all Thy blessed angels and saints. I will love Thee with my whole heart, O my God! I will abide in Thee for ever; nothing henceforth shall separate me from Thee.

At the Pater Noster.

Knowing, as we do, that this prayer was taught us by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and that in a summary manner it contains all that we may reasonably ask and hope to obtain, we should offer it with filial affection and a firm trust in God's mercy and goodness, for our own necessities, and for those of all mankind.

POR ever and ever. Amen.

Being instructed by Thy salutary precepts, and observing Thy Divine pre-

scriptions, we presume to say:

UR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name: Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us: And lead us not into temptation: But deliver us from evil. Amen.

At the Libera nos quæsumus Domine.

Let us here regard our past sins, our present daily 32

offences, and spiritual dangers to be encountered, as the real evils of this life. Resolving to contend against future temptation, we should beg the assistance of God's grace, the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin, and of all the saints.

DELIVER us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and to come; and through the intercession of the Blessed and ever glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and of the holy apostles and other saints, bountifully grant peace in our days; that, through Thy merciful providence, we may be free from sin, and secure from all disturbance. Through the same Jesus Christ Thy Son, who, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

At the Per omnia sæcula sæculorum.

A division of the host into three parts represents the three substances in Christ, viz. the Divinity of His Person, the spiritual nature of His Soul, and the material of His Sacred Body. The particle put into the chalice, means the interment of Christ in the tomb.

MAY this consecration and commingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ prepare us for a worthy reception of His choicest blessings in this life and in the next. Amen.

At the Agnus Dei.

The Pax and Agnus Dei recall to our mind that peace which Jesus Christ has made for us to His Father, by His death and passion.

COME, O Lord, and delay no longer: I cannot live without Thee; take me to Thyself, O Thou beloved of my heart! Come to me, O Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world! O, let me see Thee, love Thee, and enjoy Thee, my Treasure, my Comfort, my Life, my God, and my all!

After the Agnus Dei.

Here we should earnestly petition for that peace of soul, which surpasses all human understanding. Preservation from sin, and an observance of God's commandments for the future, should form the subject matter of our firm resolutions before Communion. We should also humbly pray for the grace of final perseverance.

O SWEET Jesus, as the wearied hart panteth after the fountains, so doth my soul thirst after Thee. But what am I, O God of infinite power, that Thou shouldst vouchsafe to look upon me! Whence this unspeakable favour, that my Lord should come in person to me! I am a poor sinner, a worm of the earth, more contemptible than the meanest of Thy

creatures, how dare I to approach so holy a God? Why should I sit down at Thy table, and feed on the bread of angels? O Lord, I am unworthy of this great favour; I shall never, never deserve the least part of Thy goodness towards me. O, King of heaven, Author and Preserver of this universe! eternal, incomprehensible Sovereign, I most humbly adore Thy Sacred Majesty! The sight of Thy greats ness, and sense of my own misery, fill me with humiliation and confusion.

At the Domine non sum dignus.

Whilst acknowledging your own unworthiness to receive this Sacred Victim at the Holy Communion, you likewise proclaim the omnipotence and bounty of God, through whose mercy you hope to obtain every good gift in this sacrament of love.

FATHER of mercies! look upon the face of Thy Christ, who became obedient even to the death of the cross! Grant, through His infinite merits, that I may here receive Thee, with profound respect, pious fervour, and purity of disposition. Come, Lord Jesus! though I am unworthy to communicate, only say

the word, and my soul shall be healed. Amen.

At this part of the Holy Sacrifice, the immediate preparation for Holy Communion begins, and it will be requisite to observe carefully the following directions.

INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE AND AT COMMUNION.

Before the time of communion, go up to the altar rails, and taking the communion cloth, hold it with both hands. Put the fore finger and thumb of either hand, to support it at some distance before you, and extend the other fingers under it, so that if any particle of the Blessed Sacrament should happen to fall, it may not reach the ground. Some ignorant persons are accustomed to wipe their mouths with the communion cloth, but this unbecoming practice should not be permitted, as the towel was not intended to serve for such a purpose. Kneel in an upright posture, having your eyes devoutly closed, or modestly cast downwards, yet keeping the head somewhat erect. When the clerk says the Confiteor, beg pardon for your sins, and humbly confess your guilt before Almighty God. As the priest pronounces the absolution, receive it with the greatest respect, as coming from our Divine Saviour Himself, whom you are about to receive. When the priest repeats the Domine non sum Dignus, or, Lord, I am not worthy, &c., three times, beg with humility and fervour, that God would forgive you all your offences. Repeat this prayer with the priest, and with the most humble feeling of your heart. At the Ecce Agnus Dei, or, Behold the Lamb of God, &c., look with respect and lively confidence on the precious Victim of salvation, beseeching Him to enlighten you by His presence and protection.

When the priest pronounces the words, Corpus Domini nostri, or, The body of our Lord, &c., open your mouth sufficiently wide, resting your tongue advanced upon the under teeth, that the priest may easily convey the consecrated particle into your mouth. When the sacred host moistens on your tongue, swallow it down gently as soon as you conveniently can, and then abstain from spitting for some time afterwards. But if it happen to touch or rest on the roof of your mouth, remove it

gently with your tongue. Afterwards, return to your place, and by acts of devotion, suitable for the occasion, entertain

your Almighty guest.

Note also, that at communion your person and dress should be clean, neat, and modestly indicative of the solemn and holy occasion. No communicant should receive with gloves on, or without having the neck and bosom decently covered. The non-observance of these practices would argue a want of respect and reverence for the most Holy Sacrament.

As you happen to have time or opportunity, whilst waiting your turn for Holy Communion, the following aspirations may be suitable exercises for immediate preparation.

Ejaculations before Communion.

Lord, as it is Thou, who hast inspired me with this design I have of communicating, give me the necessary grace to perform this duty well!

As the stag pants for the running waters, so does my soul eagerly desire Thy presence, O my God! My soul hungers for the mighty and living God!

When shall I come and appear before the face of God who is my only treasure and consolation!

O Lord, pour down Thy blessing, and

let our souls produce good fruit!

They who depart from God shall perish! But it is good for me to be united with Thee, and to place all my hopes in Thee!

What is man that Thou shouldst think

of him, and visit him!

Lord, I am not worthy Thou shouldst enter under my roof; say only the word, and my soul shall be healed! My soul hath desired Thee, even in the night! Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.*

After a little profound and pious recollection, these aspirations may be repeated, whilst the priest continues his administration of Holy Communion to others.

Ejaculations after Communion.

- O, Lamb of God, who takest away the
- * Spend at least a quarter of an hour after communion, in devotions suited to this happy occasion. It would be a great abuse if you were to return home immediately, without thinking of first entertaining the incomparable guest who deigns to honour you with this visit. For some time immediately after communicating, do not take food, out of respect for Him whom you have received, and who is the spiritual food and support of those who fear and love Him.

sins of the world, have mercy on us!

Grant us peace and rest everlasting!

O Lord, Thou art now my joy and everlasting comfort, Thou art my hope and heavenly consolation!

I will hold Thee, and will not let Thee

go!

Thou art the support of benighted sinners: Thou art the reward of the just and good!

Abide in me for ever, and do not for-

sake me! Amen.

When the priest resumes the continuation of Mass, recite the following prayers.

After the Communion.

When we have the plenitude of the Divinity abiding within us, we should pour forth our souls in transports of joy and praise. The action of thanksgiving was formerly sung, whilst the people communicated. Therefore, should we rejoice, and resolve with a pure intention often to frequent this holy sacrament, that we may be wholly inebriated with delights.

THOU art present within me, O inexhaustible source of all good: Thou art full of tenderness, and ready to distribute all Thy favours to me. Shower down Thy graces most abundantly, and consider my manifold wants. Regarding the immensity of Thy power, I beseech Thee to transform me into a new man. Divest my heart of everything that may be displeasing to Thee. Adorn it with whatever virtues may render me acceptable in Thy sight. Purify my body, sanctify my soul. Let me share, O Lord, in the merits of Thy life and death. Unite Thyself to me; preserve me for Thyself. Live Thou in me, that in Thee also I may live. Grant me all those graces, of which Thou knowest I stand most in need. Grant the same to all those for whom I am bound to pray. Canst Thou refuse me anything after what Thou hast done for me? What may I not expect from Thee, since Thou hast given me Thyself? "I will not let Thee go, until Thou hast blessed me." "Do to Thy servant according to Thy mercy." Amen.

At the Post Communion Prayers.

Whilst these prayers are recited, we should not only offer thanksgivings, but also earnest petitions, that the great Guest who has deigned to take up His habitation within us, may abide in our souls and procure for us a constant increase of blessings and spiritual graces.

THOU art now within me, O Lord, and do not again forsake me. What canst Thou

refuse me, when Thou hast given me Thyself in the Holy Eucharist? Give me an increase of faith, of hope, and of charity. Enable me to love what Thou hast commanded, and to desire only what Thou hast promised to bestow. Give me grace to keep Thy commandments, and incline my will to do whatsover shall be most pleasing to Thee. Dwell in me by Thy grace, and make me repose in Thee by a perfect love of Thy divine attributes, by a true obedience to Thy prescriptions, and by keeping steadfastly to those ways in which Thou wouldst have me to walk. Protect me from all dangers, preserve me from all sin, provide me with all necessaries both for body and soul. Direct my steps through this life, and religiously preserve me for that which is to come. Amen.

At the Last Blessing.

The benediction given by the priest means a recommendation of the Church by Jesus Christ to His Heavenly Father.

MAY the Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, bless and abide with us, now and for ever. Amen.

At the Last Gospel.

With reverence and grateful affection for the Incarnation, Redemption, and sacred presence of Jesus Christ, in this most holy Sacrament, return Him most heartfelt thanks for all the favours bestowed on you. Beg of God to remove from you everything that might tend to obscure the brightness of eternal light and the illumination of grace and truth received by your worthy participation of this most adorable Sacrament.

THAT return can I make to Thee, O VV Lord, for all the good things Thou hast given me? From the Almighty flows a perennial spring of all comforts! The Son of God has loved me, and loved to that degree, that He has consented to die for me. He has just now given me Himself. By this gift He replenishes me with all graces, and disposes me for the rewards of eternal life. O, my soul, bless the Lord, let every feeling that is within me bless and praise His holy name! O, my soul, bless the Lord! and never forget the favours He has conferred on thee! holy Mary, blessed be the fruit of thy womb, Jesus! Do thou, O Immaculate Virgin Mother, adore and thank Him on my behalf! O, all you celestial spirits, who see and enjoy God face to face, present to Him through your prayers, my

feeble acknowledgments. I bless Thee, O my God, and thank Thee with all my heart, for this the greatest of Thy favours. I see by the light of faith, the excellence of this inestimable gift Thou hast bestowed on me. I confess it is infinitely above my deserts, and that I am wholly indebted, for this pledge of Divine bounty, to Thy grace and mercy. It sensibly affects my joy and gratitude, which I must now endeavour to manifest by the whole future tenor of my life. I will never cease from thanking Thee, and proclaiming Thy great charity. I shall feel a constant desire and a ceaseless care, never to dwell on any thought, never to speak the least word, and never to do the slightest action, but what may be found agreeable to Thee or pleasing in Thy sight. Grant me perseverance, O Lord, in these my firm and sincere resolutions. Amen.

Spend some short time in silent meditation on the inestimable treasure you have obtained, after the holy sacrifice is concluded. Then recite devoutly the following protestation, as an acknowledgment of your gratitude to the Almighty.

A Prayer after Mass.

HAVING now, O Lord, happily participated in the Divine sacrifice, offered up on Thy altar in an unbloody manner; I offer Thee the grateful effusions of a heart overflowing with thanks to Thee, for all Thy favours, and in an especial manner for this institution of the most Blessed Sacrament. Thy goodness to me, O Lord, in allowing me to assist at these holy mysteries, is boundless and unspeakable. All Thou dost require in return is, that I become Thine, and immolate for Thy sake all my desires, wishes, and affections. I will henceforth, under Thy gracious protection, earnestly contend against the deceits of mine enemies; I shall resist the unhallowed efforts of sin and the devil; I shall improve in virtue and the practice of good works; I shall persevere in wise purposes, to the last moment of my fleeting life. May the holy and adorable sacrifice, at which I have now happily assisted, inspire me with greater confidence in Thy gracious protection. Make me love Thee, with a more ardent affection,

so that I may hearken to the precepts of my God, my Saviour, my Lord, and my all. Now I am about to return from Thy temple, filled with the delights of Thy heavenly presence, and animated with a strong desire of suffering all things for Thee, who art my joy and protection, my hope and life, my delight and heavenly consolation. I do not object to a loss of goods, riches, I do not object to a loss of goods, riches, honours, nay, even of life itself, provided I secure the enjoyment of Thy divine and merciful favours. What is earthly delight with loss of Thee? What happiness could I expect, without the fruition of Thy divine presence? Ah, my Lord, how hast Thou not really delighted those who sincerely love Thee! Thou art good and just, most lovely and most amiable to Thy chosen servants! I never yet assisted at mass, when I directed my attention solely on its sublime mysteries, but I exsolely on its sublime mysteries, but I experienced a powerful and salutary effect produced in my soul. May I now, O my God, have the grace to persevere in good purposes to my death. I have made a firm resolution to commence a new life to be spent in Thy service, whilst labouring with a greater energy and avidity for those

rewards that cannot perish. I shall wait with impatience for a return of Thy When these sacred ceremonies and mysteries shall be renewed and repeated, when I can by any possibility attend this holy sacrifice, I will not fail to present myself. I am too sensible of the advantages to be derived from assisting at mass, to neglect it for any minor consideration. O Lord, when shall I be so happy as to partake once more of Thy heavenly body, which is offered up on our altars as a living holocaust, for poor, distressed, and miserable sinners? Until the arrival of that happy day, give me grace to prepare myself by prayer, meditation, fasting, alms-deeds, and other works of piety, for the coming of my heavenly spouse, and the reception of my adorable Redeemer. Amen.

As time and convenience may best suit, recite the following devotions and acts after Communion, as your own judgment and fervour must more correctly determine.

PRAYERS WHICH MAY BE REPEATED OFTEN
AFTER HOLY COMMUNION.

THOU art now, O Lord, reposing within my breast: O what a consoling and my breast; O, what a consoling and loving reflection! Can this mould of clay contain so precious a jewel! What can mortal ever return to the Lord for such an inestimable benefit! Have I anything to give Thee, O Lord, worthy Thy acceptance? Nothing, absolutely nothing! How shall I be able even to return Thee adequate thanks? Henceforth, I resign myself for disposal entirely to Thy will and direction. I have nothing now to desire, for Thou hast given me already, not only more than I deserve, but as much as Thou couldst give. Do with me as Thou shalt be pleased; treat me as Thou shalt consider expedient; only spare my soul, and conduct me to Thy heavenly kingdom, where, with the angels and holy saints, I may enjoy Thee evermore. Amen.

THANKS be to Thee, O holy Father, God Almighty, who of Thy great

mercy hast vouchsafed to send Thy only Son, from the highest heavens, into this vale of misery, to take our human nature on Him, and to suffer most sharp pains and a most bitter death. This hath been accomplished, that He might bring our souls to Thy kingdom, and leave His precious body, which He assumed, for our food and comfort, during our pilgrimage in this world. I thank Thee, O most merciful Lord Jesus, with all the earnestness and sincerity which Thou hast so well deserved from me. I offer Thee my best feelings of gratitude, that Thou hast fed me with Thine own most precious body, by which I hope to obtain the salvation of my soul, and everlasting life. Come, O Holy Ghost, inflame my heart with the ardent fire of divine love, that I may continually render most acceptable praises to the holy and undivided Trinity, to whom, three persons in one God, be given all glory and honour, by all creatures, world without end. Amen.

ACTS AFTER COMMUNION.

An Act of Resignation.

Being now, as it were, the living Temple of the Holy of Holies, Christ having given Himself entirely to you, resign yourself altogether to His disposal. Do not murmur at any fortune which He may hereafter assign you. Everything which He has given you place in His hands—life, fortune, talents and acquirements. Profess your readiness to love and serve Him; to do whatsoever He commands, and to suffer whatever He permits. Beg of Him to accept these your voluntary offerings. Beseech the Divine Majesty to afford you His protection, and be your patron in all the after concerns of your life. Resolve to put your whole trust in Him, henceforth; and to offer up the first fruits of every action to His honour and glory.

SECT. I.

O MY Lord God, let Thy name be for ever blessed and praised! O, what a great Lord, what a mighty God, what a powerful King, what a just disposer of all things Thou art! The Creator and Redeemer of all mankind, Thou art their reward and everlasting crown, if they deserve Thy countenance. How beneficent and merciful art Thou, and but for Thy goodness, I could never have had any expectation of pardon. In the extension of mercy Thou hast far excelled, great as

all Thy other works are. This has been happily ordered for me, for I stand much in need of Thy mercy. Thou art everything that is good, and in no man-ner art Thou undeserving our warmest love. Thy indulgence to me alone seems unaccountable. I do not deserve anything like favour, but the greatest punishment possible ought to be inflicted on me. At the last day, let me not be tried with strictness, proportioned to the magnitude of my offences, but let Thy tender mercy plead in my behalf. I should tremble, O Lord, to stand before Thy tribunal, if I were not regarded by Thee with an eye of mercy. O, my Lord, most gracious and most just, preserve me henceforth from all sins, that I may come to Thee, and to the everlasting enjoyment of Thy glory. I know that I have been one of the greatest sinners imaginable; but then, I am confident, that the same almighty power, which caused the heavens and the earth to be made from nothing, can also cause my sins to be forgiven if I heartily repent. I also know that Thou canst give us Thy body and blood under the elementary appearances of bread and wine.

Thou canst transfer Thyself to my soul, with all Thy Divine power and majesty. In this manner, Thou hast given Thyself to me, to one, a wretched and vile sinner. The God of immensity and everlasting glory comes down from heaven, from the right hand of His Eternal Father, to this vale of misery, afterwards allowing Himself to be offered up to His Heavenly Father, for the consolation of afflicted and abandoned worldlings, when taken by them for their spiritual food and nourishment! These favours must surpass the feeble understanding of such poor and unenlightened creatures as we are.

SECT. II.

Look down upon me, O Lord; for if ignorance or vicious frailty can excite Thee to compassion, I must necessarily move Thee to pity, I being a sinner deserving Thy disregard and condemnation. Have pity, O Lord, and keep me hereafter from committing sin. Thou hast now given Thyself to me, and Thou feedest me with Thy most precious body which Thou hast given to me as a pledge

of what Thou hast intended to do for me. Grant, Lord, if in communicating heretofore, I ever happened to be so unfortunate as to receive unworthily, so unfortunate as to receive unworthily, or "eat judgment to myself, not discerning the body of the Lord," that I may now make amends for this sacrilegious act, by having approached Thy holy table worthily and duly prepared, this last time I have had the happiness of receiving. Thee. Fear makes me shudder, when I think on the possibility of my having think on the possibility of my having failed in any particular; but I hope, my Lord Jesus, that such fear is now groundless, and that in this respect I have been at least secured through Thy goodness to me. This fear is however necessary and wholesome; for it oftentimes restrains a sinner from running into evils, which without some such restriction he might hardly avoid. It makes a virtuous person more careful not to lose the friendship of God. For such reason, I shall ever desire it; give me then, O Lord, this virtue of holy fear. I will henceforth endeavour to become what I ought to have been long ago, Thy favourite servant and beloved child. I am now, O Lord,

Thine own for ever. Let heaven and earth, with all they contain, bless Thy adorable name, and rejoice with me! I am now the living receptacle of the Holy of Holies-of the Eternal God-of Jesus Christ Himself! Let me ponder on this dignity so conferred, and be overwhelmed with astonishment! How could I imagine it, were I not thus assured by Thyself? Thou hast told me how greatly I have been favoured; and I cannot doubt Thy word. But that Thou shouldst be so good to me is incredible even to myself, so well acquainted with the magnitude and enormity of my many grievous sins and offences. Thou, O my Saviour. to come down from heaven, and visit one of Thy meanest creatures, and to refresh his fainting, frame with that bread of life, which the angels and saints would most eagerly desire. But to whom art Thou going to give Thyself? Heaven and earth hear it and be astonished! To one, who from the moment he was capable of committing sin, never ceased from offending; to one who ought to be entirely Thine own, O Sovereign Truth and Light! Yet he has endeavoured to

become a slave to the prince of darkness, and to the avowed enemy of man's salvation. One, who ought to have been the faithful soldier of Christ, has changed sides, and shamefully deserted to the enemy's ranks. One, who ought to be most faithful to God, has raised the standard of rebellion against Him.

SECT. III.

O Lord, how could I ever cease from being wholly Thine? Why should I turn to other objects? I must indeed be the most wretched and ungrateful sinner that ever drew the breath of life, if I could bring myself again to revolt or sin once more. No, dearest Lord, I have pledged myself to detest all evil, and do Thou strengthen me in my resolution to abide by that promise. Thou hast given Thyself to me, and shall I hesitate longer to give myself, with all I am or possess, to Thee? Receive me, O Lord,—take me to Thyself. I throw myself into Thy arms—do not cast me away. I know that Thou art good—and in Thy goodness I trust—in that goodness which was

never yet known to deceive any one, who confided in it for mercy and protection. Thou art strong, and Thou wilt not draw Thou art strong, and Thou wilt not draw back when I throw myself upon Thee. Saint Austin says: "Throw yourself upon Him; He will not withdraw to let you fall." How sincerely do I feel the characteristic force of his language. I am convinced of its truth, and I have also experienced the efficacy of these words contained in this sentence. As I before said, I give myself up to Thee; do with me as Thou thinkest best. Thou knowme as Inou thinkest best. Thou know-est, Lord, full well, as if I were after declaring it to Thee, that I wish now to accept or endure anything at Thy hands. Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in Thy sight." (Matt. xi. 26.) Give me life, and it shall be devoted to Thy service. Give me talents and they shall be directed to the extension of Thy honour and glory. Give me health and strength, and I shall thank Thee for these favours. Send me sickness, and I shall look upon it as a visitation from Thee, to remind me of my mortal infirmities, and that I may always be found prepared. Send me trouble and

affliction, I will not repine. Or take me at any moment to Thyself, and I shall rejoice everlastingly. Thus, Thou seest and knowest the peace and happiness of mind I now enjoy. I am ready for any vicissitude of fortune which Thou art pleased to send me. In any change of my condition, I hope, neither to be puffed up with arrogance or pride in prosperity; whilst in adversity, with Thy grace assisting me, I shall preserve equanimity of mind and peace of soul, to support me through all dangers and trials. These are my earnest resolves; which I hope shall not only continue for this moment, but to the end of my life.

SECT. IV.

Order me now to do anything that is most pleasing to Thee, and Thou shalt find me not wanting in such particular. Did I but know what Thou wouldst wish me to accomplish, I would immediately hasten to perform it. I know that nothing will be more pleasing to Thee than to keep Thy law and Thy commandments, to abstain from sin, and to avoid those

incentives which unhappily lead to its commission. This I will do, and with commission. This I will do, and with the greatest cheerfulness, since it is pleasing to Thee. I will ever be obedient to Thy word, which the Holy Catholic Church so faithfully expounds. I will be most strict in fulfilling the several duties of my state in life. I will do whatsoever Thy gospel commands, as explained by the lawful pastors of Thy Holy Church. I am Thine, O Lord, henceforth and for ever; write my name in the book of life, that I may hereafter come to Thee, the Lord and giver of life. Thee, whom the Lord and giver of file. Thee, whom the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and disciples admired and adored, I will also praise and extol. I return Thee my property, and even my life, which Thou gavest me, beseeching Thee to dispose of them as Thou thinkest fit. May these be disposed of in the best manner possible to secure my eternal salvation. I have nothing in return to ask, but Thy friendship and assistance. These would be much more than an equivalent, for the most precious treasures which earth could afford, much less what I can offer Thee. Grant these favours to me, O Lord, and

I will care very little afterwards how my worldly affairs may be ordered. I rely upon Thy goodness for obtaining these blessings, now that I am thought worthy of being a receptacle for Him who is the Lord of Heaven and Earth. I offer myself to Thee, O sweetest Jesus, and through Thee, I give myself to Thy Eternal Father, and to the Holy Spirit. Accept this offering from me. If I could make a greater sacrifice I would even be ready to obey Thy requirements. But Thou wilt be content with what I can perform; and I should be the basest of all mortals, if I did not do all in my power to merit the favour of a God so good and just.

SECT. V.

O Lord, anything Thou art pleased to do with me must be accepted, not alone with resignation but with delight. Thou alone knowest my present readiness to love and serve Thee—to obey Thee—to do whatsoever Thou hast commanded—even to lay down my life, were it necessary, for Thy honour and glory. Do with me as Thou thinkest expedient, I

am ready to obey; no matter what shall be the result, I am still Thine. Neither princes, powers, principalities, racks, dungeons, or torments, can ever separate me from the love of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I say this with the warmest outpouring of my heart; for I have firmly resolved on it, and I will keep with steadiness this my resolution. Give me Thy grace, and I can withstand any temptation or seduction, no matter how great; refuse me Thy aid, and I must irretrievably be carried away with the torrent of my own passions. This is my earnest petition to Thee; receive it and I shall be happy. But if Thou wilt not, I shall be most wretched. I trust to Thy goodness, however, to grant all my reasonable requests; such as are inexpedient I dare not expect should be ratified.

I leave it with Thee to decide, whether these I have preferred are admissible; if not, set no seal of Thy approbation on them. Thou art all-wise, and therefore Thou wilt know whether or not they are reasonable or expedient. If they tend towards my eternal salvation, I may presume they are in accordance with Thy

desires: and I confidently hope that Thou wilt then grant them. But if they be directed towards any merely worldly or selfish object, or otherwise unreasonable, do Thou refuse Thy meed of approbation. Every act of Thine proves Thee to be good and just. Everything Thou hast done with regard to me evidently shows, that Thy actions are truly wise. Every breath I draw, or every word I speak, comes to me by Thy appointment. Not a hair can even fall from my head without Thy knowledge. Besides these instances of Thy protecting care and wisdom, or even passing them over, I have a thousand other proofs of Thy providence and omnipotence. I therefore cannot hesitate to throw myself upon Thee, and to seek Thy clemency.

SECT. VI.

I am now in union with Thee; and Thou art united to me, by virtue of this Holy Sacrament. What more do I want than such a distinction? It must inspire me with fullest confidence in Thee, if I should ever be disposed to doubt Thy promises. I never will, O Lord of Truth, for they are infallible, as Thou Thyself art unchanging. If I ever engaged seriously to earn the reward of a life-service to Thee, I was never yet deceived in the return Thou hast made me. I resign myself now entirely to Thy service. I purpose to do Thy will in all things. Do Thou in turn accept these offerings. I trust that I shall have no occasion hereafter to consider myself a recreant. I shall seek first of all Thy heavenly kingdom. With Thy holy grace I shall overcome all those difficulties I have yet to meet. I will overcome every obstacle which the devil may throw in my way. I will resist steadfastly all those temptations with which the enemy shall seek to obstruct my passage. I do not expect to enter into Thy heavenly kingdom without pains and labour. I know Thou wilt chastise those whom Thou lovest. If I did not suffer some trials from Thy hands, I could hardly believe I was Thy friend. Therefore I shall meekly accept any punishment which Thou art pleased to inflict. I put my whole trust in Thee; henceforth receive me into

Thy hands. Warn me and protect me against all dangers and temptations. From this moment forward I am Thine. I will always look upon Thee, as a kind and loving Father, who has pardoned his rebellious child. I will offer to Thee constantly the first fruits of every good action or desire, that these may be a pledge of what I will afterwards accomplish. In the morning when I rise, I will be seech Thee to regulate my conduct according to Thy holy law for that day. In the night, when I retire to rest, I will entrust myself to Thee, that I may repose under Thy gracious protection. My business and worldly concerns I make subordinate to my eternal interests. From this moment, also, I resign myself to Thee, that I may spend the remainder of my life in Thy service, and at last obtain secure possession of Thy heavenly kingdom. Amen.

An Act of Thanksgiving.

Give God thanks for the inestimable blessing He has just conferred on you, and endeavour to express your gratitude to Him in feelings suited to the occasion. Make known your intention of becoming His servant, and of doing whatsoever He shall appoint. Surrender

all you possess into His hands, as a slight recompense for what He has given you. Beseech Him that He will allow you, at the end of your mortal pilgrimage, to praise and magnify His name in heaven.

SECT. I.

MY God, I render Thee a thousand thanks for all the favours Thou hast conferred upon me from the commencement of this world. What words can describe the burden of gratitude under which I labour? Where shall I begin to enumerate Thy goodness? Thou hast thought of me from all eternity. Thou camest down from heaven, O my divine Saviour, from the right hand of Thy eternal Father. Thou hast entered into the chaste womb of Thy Virgin Mother. By the power and operation of the Holy Ghost, Thou wert made man. Thou hast suffered privations from want of food for many days. Thou wert tempted by the prince of darkness. Thou wert exposed to cold, heat, and to all changes of weather. In poverty and in worldly wretchedness. Thou hast travelled about for three years, working miracles, healing the sick, preaching Thy Gospel, and con-

verting sinners to the true Faith. In performing these missionary labours there were few persons to console Thee in suffering—none except Thy Immaculate Virgin Mother, Thy apostles and disciples. Thou wert maligned, calumniated, and misrepresented by Scribes and Phari-sees,—Thou wert insulted and defamed by the High Priests. Never was innocence so irreproachable as Thine; yet the foulest criminal never endured so much contumely and reproach. Before the commencement of Thy passion, and when Thou hadst entered the Garden of Olives, Thy agony was so great that drops of blood flowed from Thee. Thou hadst suffered one of Thy confidants, an apostle even, to betray Thee. Thou wert given up to an outrageous rabble; Thou wert beaten, bound, struck at, spit upon, but nothing could overcome Thy patience. Thou wert brought into a judgment hall, unjustly condemned by judges, and sworn against by perjured witnesses. wert scourged, crowned with thorns, beaten with a reed, and obliged to endure all the insults of low-bred malice and blind fanaticism. Thou wert obliged to

carry Thy cross to the place of execution, there to be stripped naked in the presence of several spectators, to increase Thy shame and confusion. Thou wert ignominiously stretched upon a cross, and Thy tender hands and feet were fastened thereto with rough and sharp nails. When raised on the cross, Thy bones were all distorted, Thy sinews strained, and Thy flesh mangled. Enduring most exquisite torments, Thou wert mocked by Thy persecutors during those three hours of agony which Thou suffered.

SECT. II.

O, what a good Lord, to endure all this for my sake! What a great and excellent King Thou art, proving by Thy love a claim on man's allegiance! But how have I requited Thee for all these benefits? I have abused Thy kindness by all sorts of sinful profanation. I must have rendered Thee hostile to me, owing to my many crimes. But all Thy goodness, if I may so express it, is eclipsed in Thy last favour conferred on me, which infinitely surpasses all other gifts. In order

that I, and all the rest of mankind, should be for ever indebted to Thy bounty, at Thy last supper Thou hast left us a final, and the greatest, benefit Thou couldst bestow, Thy sacred body and blood in the adorable Eucharist. When Thou wert going to give Thyself up into the hands of Thy Father, Thou didst resolve that we should have a lasting pledge of Thy love. It was for this purpose Thou has bequeathed to us such an inestimable legacy. that we might always have a most excellent food and drink, which would support us, when our souls hunger and thirst for heavenly things. I recognize the beneficent intention Thou hadst in feeding and sustaining poor sinners. I admire and feel grateful for Thy goodness, in having instituted this divine banquet for man's advantage and refreshment. Thou art infinitely good and bountiful to me, O Lord! In strict justice, I could never expect such a favour from Thee. I thank Thee from the bottom of my heart. Thou hast deserved more praise than I can give Thee. In truth, O Lord, I could not return Thee suitable acknowledgments; but such as I can offer, be pleased to accept

them. I present Thee with overflowing effusions of a heart teeming with gratitude. I offer Thee all the homage it can bestow, and do Thou accept my poor return. I know that no language can adequately express the feelings of those who truly love Thee. I am now one of these devoted lovers. I feel more than I can express. Thou knowest the greatness of that love I bear Thee, and how far it surpasses in degree the love I bear towards any other creature. Would it were unbounded. Thou, who art the searcher of hearts, canst say whether these expressions of mine are fairly represented by what I inwardly feel. I have little doubt of the kindly estimation Thou wilt have regarding my sincerity of profession. Yet I have some hesitation in asserting, that Thy sentence, if pronounced, will be recorded in my favour. I am hopefully convinced of Thy love, O my dearest Saviour, and I think I can most truthfully assert likewise, that nothing will be sufficiently strong to break this love now existing betwixt me and Thee.

SECT. III.

O, Divine Love, which shall ever consume my heart with a continual flame! O, burning desires of affection for Thee, which will never be extinguished, and which will not decay! Farewell all vain love for creatures, farewell to all the shadowy concerns of this world! I will henceforth attend only to heavenly affairs, and place my hopes beyond all transitory illusions of this sinful life. My thanks for that heavenly bread, which Thou hast given me, and which Thou hast still promised to give, shall only end with my life. The remembrance of this favour shall be ever enduring. Let it not be objected to me, that I propose doing more than I have any intention or inclination for performing; the residue of my life, O Lord, and the manner in which I intend to regulate it, will I hope prove quite the contrary. I must be Thy faithful servant for ever. The manner in which I hope to serve Thee cannot fail in making Thee love me in return. I will be strict and faithful to whatsoever engagements I make. I will feel peculiarly honoured by Thee,

if Thou wilt permit me to serve Thee; I shall be ready to do anything Thou mayest appoint. I know it is Thy desire that I should be Thy friend. I will endeavour to love and serve Thee, with truth and constancy. I need no stimulus to excite me in this course of action; for Thy love, and those kind offices, which Thou hast rendered me, should induce me to return Thee the best services in my power. I should be miserably defi-cient in gratitude, if I did not earnestly wish to become Thy servant. If I am permitted to serve Thee, this is an honour which the most illustrious prince on earth might envy. This is a degree of high privilege, which if rightly understood must induce men to leave off the pursuit of ambitious views, and to direct their attention solely upon a worthy object. It will be my sole ambition, to arrive at this happy consummation; and I will not care to proceed farther in the pursuit of earthly concerns. I am indeed unworthy of Thy confidence and love; but when I attain the best pledge of Thy regard, should I look for any higher preferment? Although I am not worthy of this great

favour in the Eucharistic banquet, I will do whatsoever Thou shalt appoint, to prove what sacrifices I shall be prepared to make. I will surrender everything which I now possess to Thee. Do Thou with my possessions as Thou shalt think most advisable. Anything I have, Thou art entitled to it for a thousand reasons; I even beseech Thee to take all things, for they are much safer in Thy hands than in mine. O may I yet joyfully come to that kingdom of Thy glory, where with the angels and saints, Thy constant attendants, I may praise and glorify Thee for ever. Amen.

An Act of Fear.

Think upon the dreadful torments of the damned in hell, and the punishments which await hereafter all wicked unrepenting sinners. Rejoice in your present happy lot, for having escaped these judgments. Tremble for the consequences of what would happen to you, if in like manner you should be taken out of this life without preparation, and thus be sent to appear before the great Judge of men. If you have any evil inclination that claims a place too near your heart, repent of it, and make instant reparation for it, lest you should not devote in future sufficient time to such a duty. Make a resolution to work out your salvation in fear and trembling.

SECT I.

BUT, O my Lord, Thou art a just God, and shall I be able alone to stand before Thy judgment seat, and expose myself to the rigours of a strict scrutiny? I have yet many faults to overcome, and many bad passions to extirpate, before I can consider myself perfectly united to Thee, in such a way as to become Thine in a lasting manner. I may seem confident of Thy friendship now, but yet I tremble when I reflect on my past Confessions and Communions, with the resolutions I then formed, and how I abided by them. I thought with myself, perhaps, that I would never be so frail or unfortunate would never be so trail or unfortunate as to fall again into sin. But Thou hast seen what little I can do without Thy grace, and from past experience I know this frailty of mine. Let it not happen with me now, as on former occasions. Strengthen me with Thy graces, to withstand all future dangers and temptations. Give me Thy grace, which will speak a Give me Thy grace, which will enable me to do Thy will in all things. Oh, what must have been my anguish and vain remorse had I suddenly departed

out of this world in the state of mortal sin, before making some of my former Confessions! I must, perhaps, have participated in all those sufferings, which would be inflicted on an unrepenting sinner. This might have been my miserable lot, and I tremble even to think on it. Such might be my misfortune, to be immediately plunged into devouring flames. Oh my God, what a dreadful death! What a cheerless future prospect! What a miserable eternity I should have to undergo! I am assured that such would have been my inevitable fate, and a fate which I should have brought upon myself, through my own criminal conduct. To be shut up in an infernal dungeon, to be tormented with everlasting fire, to be scourged by hellish furies, to be loaded with the weight of chains which no power can break. The Almighty Himself has declared that out of hell there is no redemption, and the inex-orable word, which He has once pro-nounced, can never be changed. Oh dreadful torments, which shall never have an end, what would not any really sensi-ble person do, in order to escape them?

I had rather, O Lord, pass all the time I have yet to live—or even were I to be here for many ages—I had much sooner spend this time, in exercising the greatest austerity and mortification, in fasting and in penitential works, than to suffer even for one single hour the flames of hell. St. Augustine says: "the impious pass from one punishment to another—from the burnings of concupiscence to the flames of hell." And if this be the case, what dreadful punishments have I not avoided; for I will speak thus confidently, since I have had the happiness to be united with Thee in this adorable Sacrament.

SECT. II.

I am resolved, never to do anything henceforth, that would lead me by a single step towards this pit of everlasting perdition. When I am tempted to sin, let me never yield to the bait, no matter how alluring, but say constantly with St. Chrysostom, "momentary is that which delights, eternal is that which tortures." A short reflection on the truth of this maxim must indeed keep me from sin, if

I have any care for my own real interests. To treat myself or my immortal soul, as if deserving God's enmity, would be a most consummate mistake of folly or of policy. And yet, I do not seem to think it so egregious. I should never resolve to ruin my soul and myself by continuing in a state of mortal sin, the greatest of all possible evils. I will not fall into such a snare for the future. I have avowed this to Thee heretofore; but I will now steadily maintain my present resolution. To be sure, I have promised love of Thee before, but never in so decided a manner as I now do; for I hope that this my resolution shall never fail. No, my Lord, I am firmly persuaded of this truth, that if I ask Thy succour, Thou wilt not fail to lend me Thy gracious assistance. I will ever advance with caution and fear, so that I may not err; for the fear of Thee is necessary, and even salutary. When I am restrained by it, I cannot do what is altogether contrary to Thy wishes. Oftentimes, when I take into account the sad condition of those who are now in hell, and when I reflect upon their hopeless misery;

I ask myself what must now be the dreadful state of their consciences, tormented with thoughts of miseries they endure, and must continue to endure for ever? They know, that if compared with eternity they had passed thousands or millions of years in torments, these would have been only as the evening of a day approaching, which will not even reach the dawn! Oh horrible idea! O dreadful thought! How many thousands areadful thought! How many thousands and millions of years have yet to pass away, and when these are gone, eternity has still to begin. All those years are as nothing compared to eternity. Eternal sufferings must still continue; they must begin afresh; and these fearful anticipations are ever present to their memory. If the damned only shed one tear in five hundred thousand many them. hundred thousand years, they might fill up five hundred times five hundred thou-sand oceans, such as those around our earth; and yet these poor outcasts would be as far as ever from ending their dreadful sufferings.

SECT. III.

Oh, unhappy wretch that I must have been, to continue in my sinful practices, and all this evil threatened against those, who do not faithfully keep the commandments of Almighty God and the precepts of His Church. I knew all God's denunciations must have been executed, just as well as if I had experienced their infliction; and yet I blindly continued to follow the bent of my evil inclinations, whilst thus I ran headlong into ruin. When I think on all this, the very heart within me sinks through fear, that Thou mightest have brought down the heavy hand of Thy avenging justice on my sinful head. This dread of Thy vengeance is again replaced by a loving confidence in Thee; and I am now in a state, I may reasonably hope, that many nominal Christians, who merely profess their belief in Thy holy name, might well envy. Before my last Communion I was unprepared, perhaps, to meet Thee or to look upon Thee, if Thou wert pleased to call me away from this life. But now I have my garments girt around, and my staff ready to set forward, when Thou wilt give the signal for me to come at Thy call. Let me then look carefully into myself, and endeavour to see, if I have any heretofore undiscovered faults lurking within my breast. If I find any, I will expiate them by a timely repentance. I will cry to Thee unceasingly, O Lord, until by wearying Thee with entreaties, I prevail on Thee to succour a poor and miserable sinner. I am not worthy Thy considera-tion, O Lord, and I am the vilest reptile upon earth; let it not accord, however, with the decrees of Thy Divine Majesty, to punish such a worthless offender. Henceforth I will be prepared and ready to depart, when I am called by Thee from this life. I will now and henceforward be faithful to Thee; I shall honour and obey Thee; I will never again provoke or offend Thee. I will always tremble for my salvation, and fear Thy judgments, that I may hereafter come to adore Thee in Thy heavenly kingdom. Amen.

An Act of Praise.

Pour forth all the gratitude of your heart and soul for the infinite merits of our Redeemer, who on all

occasions has been so good to you, but especially at the time, when He has given you His body and blood for your spiritual refreshment. Enumerate some of those favours you have received from the Almighty, and thank Him for their reception. Reflect on His immensity, goodness, and greatness. Praise Him especially for these characteristics of His Divine Majesty. Dwell more particularly on His incomprehensible bounty, by visiting you in this sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist. Recall to mind His other peculiar attributes. Beseech Him that He would admit you hereafter to His heavenly kingdom, there to praise and glorify Him, in company with all the holy saints and angels.

SECT. I.

PRAISE and glory be to Thee, O Lord, king of heaven and earth! Let all that is within me praise and glorify Thy almighty power! Let the heavens and the earth, with all creatures therein, join with me and extol Thy holy name for ever! Let even irrational animals and inanimate creatures proclaim Thy praise and immensity! Thy grandeur is proclaimed in a variety of ways, O Lord, for there is nothing created, which doth not set forth the greatness of Thy majesty throughout this universe. Revolutions of the heavenly bodies, flaming meteors in the heavens, vegetation on this earth, rolling seas, high mountains, wide rivers

and lakes, different degrees of heat and cold, various climes and changes of sea-sons, fishes in the sea, birds of the air, the brute creation on earth, all these proclaim Thy greatness, and what wonders Thou art able to accomplish. All these cannot owe their origin to a blind chance, nor could they of their own accord spring suddenly into existence. Thy living creatures could not be provided with food and drink for their support, without the special interference of some Divine omnipotence. They could not be originally produced or be naturally multiplied, without Thy prevision and appointment. But man, the most perfect of all Thy works, how wonderfully and exquisitely hast Thou not fashioned him! Thou hast gifted him with a power, wisdom, intellect, wit, memory, and understanding, which Thou hast refused to other creatures. Thou hast made him under Thyself a ruler and a master in this world; Thou hast given him dominion over all creatures that dwell in it. He is nobly formed and gracefully modelled: each bone, muscle, sinew, feature, and limb have their own peculiar excellence. 35

They are admirably adapted to all purposes, for which they are designed by the Almighty, who directs and controls all things. "Thou art wonderful, O Lord, in Thy works." Thou art the Almighty Creator of all this mechanism, so well arranged: Thou art the Preserver of what has been called into existence; and Thou art that Divine Being who hast appointed for each object its special place in crea-Thou art the Holy One, worthy of all praise and adoration. I give Thee thanks for all Thy benefits, and Thou hast deserved all acknowledgment, for Thy infinite excellence. As one of Thy poor creatures. I should understand and admire these Thy wonderful works and high perfections. I shall ever feel in my soul an eager desire to serve Thee, to praise Thee, and to glorify Thee. From the bottom of my heart, O my dearest Saviour-and Thou knowest the greatness of my love for Thee at this moment-I give Thee thanks and praise.

SECT. II.

I will sing hymns of jubilation and

thanksgiving to Thee without ceasing. Let me therefore proclaim in the canticle of the three children: "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord, praise and exalt Him above all for ever. You angels of the Lord, bless the Lord; bless the Lord you heavens. All you waters that are above the heavens, bless the Lord: all you powers of the Lord, bless the Lord. Sun and moon bless the Lord; you stars of heaven, bless the Lord. Let every shower and dew bless the Lord; and all the spirits of the good, bless the Lord. You fire and heat, bless the Lord; you cold and heat, bless the Lord. Dews and hoary frosts, bless you the Lord; frost and cold, bless the Lord. Bless the Lord. you ice and snow; you nights and days, bless the Lord. Light and darkness. bless ye the Lord; you lightnings and clouds, bless the Lord. May the earth bless the Lord, and praise Him and magnify Him for ever. You mountains and hills, bless the Lord; and all things that spring forth upon the earth, bless the Lord. Bless the Lord, you fountains; you seas and rivers, bless the Lord. You whales, and all things that move in the

waters, bless the Lord. All ye fowls of the earth, bless the Lord. All you beasts and cattle, bless the Lord; you sons of men, bless the Lord. Let Israel bless the Lord, and praise Him and magnify Him for ever. You priests of the Lord. bless the Lord; you servants of the Lord, bless the Lord. Bless the Lord, you spirits and souls of the just, you holy and humble of heart, bless ye the Lord. O, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever. Let us bless the Father and the Son, with the Holy Ghost; let us praise Him and magnify Him for ever. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, in the firmament of heaven, and worthy of praise, and glorious, and magnified for ever." Again, may I not exclaim in the language used by holy Zacharias:-"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people. And hath raised up a horn of salvation to us, in the house of David His servant. As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, who are from the beginning. Salvation from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us.

To perform mercy to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant. The oath which He swore to Abraham our father, that He would give Himself to us. That without fear being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we may serve Him, in holiness and justice before Him, all our days. And Thou, O Child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Most High, for Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare His ways. To give knowledge of salvation to His people unto the remission of their sins. Through the bowels of the mercy of our God, in which the Orient from on high hath visited us. To enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; to direct our feet in the way of peace." Let these, with like ejaculations and prayers of the saints, always proceed from my lips, in Thy praise and honour. They do not in the least degree exceed what is owing to Thy mercies and excellencies. They are in accordance with that strong spirit of faith, in those who spoke such words; and how genuinely sincere is not the language of their hearts, as interpreted by these expressions? They are not seasoned with

affectation or flattery, like language addressed to temporal potentates; they are truthful and unspoiled by the conventional usages of this world.

SECT. III.

Oh that I could, without doubt, believe myself to have the same burning love for Thee, as that which those happy souls so well expressed. Nevertheless, I do love Thee, however feebly; I feel it within my heart, and I call on Thee to strengthen this bond of attachment. Were it for nothing else, but because I have received Thy sacred body and blood, which Thou givest me in this adorable sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, to be my food and refreshment, I should have abundant cause to love Thee. To omit all Thy other benefits, which are so innumerable, that I could not severally refer to them, I must for ever feel indebted to Thee for this single favour. The more I regard it, the more I feel the effects of Thy Divine mercy; and, therefore, the more love do I entertain towards Thee, who hast instituted this adorable sacrament to assist my weak efforts. O God, who art infinitely good, look down upon me, a poor and despicable dependant. Raise me up from earth, to chant Thy praises and celebrate Thy goodness without ceasing, after having experienced the greatness of Thy favours and benefits towards me. My communion shall produce in me, I hope, all those desired effects, which Thou hast intended it to procure. It shall ever be looked upon by me, as the commencement of a new life, to be spent wholly in the service of my God.

SECT. IV.

I thank Thee, for all the benefits Thou hast bestowed upon me, for creating me, and giving me food, raiment, with all things necessary for my subsistence in this life. I have been redeemed and preserved by Thee from eternal death. I was endowed with those graces, necessary for the attainment of Thy celestial joys and eternal happiness. Yet I neglected all advantages; and even now, I am hardly brought back from my evil ways, when pressingly obliged to regain Thee.

It was Thou, O Lord, who hath inspired me with this resolution of reform; and how sincerely do I thank Thee for the good design I have now adopted. Thou art bountiful and merciful; I shall even say, Thou art too indulgent, in having inspired me with this design. I shall ever remember Thy happy interference on my behalf. Great and exalted is Thy Divine Majesty; immortal and renowned are all the attributes attaching to Thy holy name. Thou art worthy of honour and jubilation from me and from all other creatures. But in this holy sacrament, which I have now received, the greatness of Thy power and the immensity of Thy love must be a constant subject for astonishment to us weak mortals. Thou art far above all human comprehension. I cannot presume to unravel the mysterious ways of Thy Divine Providence. I have now only one thing to desire, which is, that I may be thought worthy of obtaining a place from Thee in heaven, where with Thy saints and angels, I will adore and proclaim Thy mercies for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN, AND TO

HOLY Mother of God, thou to whom, amongst all other women on earth, the angel Gabriel announced these joyous tidings. "That thou shouldst conceive and bring forth a Son, and call His name Jesus," beg of thy Divine Son, that my communion may produce in my soul the love of Him, who now really and corporally dwells therein. Being His Mother, and the illustrious parent of the Eternal King of heaven and earth, He will not refuse thee anything, whatever thou mavest ask. or whatever I may require through thy powerful intercession. I know that thy prayers and influence with our Blessed Redeemer, must be greater than that, which even all the saints of heaven can exercise in my behalf. Look down, O most pure Mother, on me, and take compassion on my sinful soul. Turn thy gracious ear to the earnest entreaties of a wretch, who had fallen into the commission of most heinous crimes and offences; but who, by an application of the infallible remedy obtained in

frequenting this Blessed Sacrament, has turned back once more upon the path of life, and happily, as he hopes, attained the direction in which he should henceforth walk. Thou art ready and willing to attend to my petitions, and when thou hast directed thy attention to relieve them, such interference must surely be successful. I beseech thee, O heavenly Queen, to hear me, by all that is most dear to thee. By the delight thou hast received on earth from being so frequently in the company of thy beloved Son; by all the sorrows, which thou hast endured during the infliction of His pains and tor-ments, when He was scourged at the pillar, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross; by His ready obedience to thee, and meek submission in Galilee; by the love which He constantly bore thee; by His compliance with thy requests, and by His first miracle wrought at thy instigation; by all these, and many other favours which thou hast received at His hands, intercede with Him for me, that I may in future strive to overcome all temptations, and whatever dangers I may have to encounter. I know that God constantly

trieth those whom He loveth. Therefore, as I earnestly hope that I am now in favour with Him, I do not expect to escape temptations. I also know, that He will not allow me to be tempted beyond my strength; and but for this consideration, I should probably despair, in the face of my admitted deficiencies. Human nature is weak and frail. If not supported by Divine grace, it must be hurried along with the current of passion, and be precipitated into the gulf of eternal perdition. I tremble, when I reflect on this, but there is great consolation in knowing that God is far more powerful than the devil. His arm is sufficient to hold me, when the enemy draws me by opposite forces towards himself. If I do not make some effort of myself to resist, I shall not be assisted by the Almighty; for if I have a strong inclination to run headlong into ruin, I must inevitably fall. When I thus feel an irresistible desire to revolt, I cannot blame Divine Justice, if I be allowed blindly to take my own course. have now my choice, either to become a citizen of heaven or a bondsman of Satan; I know which of these conditions it is

556 PRAYERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN,

undoubtedly better for me to select. Is the Almighty to be held accountable, if I do not take the right course? Surely, no imputation of injustice can be ascribed to God, if I knowingly do what is wrong at this particular crisis. I must blame myself for the consequences, but I hope that my future state will prove the wisdom of my present choice. For my past sins, I must ever lament. Let me take care that those temptations which I may experience for the future, will not be found irresistible; and if I am still prone to commit sin, may I trust it shall never wholly separate me from the love of thee. O, holy Virgin, look upon me, and obtain for me firm persistence in these my resolutions address the present of the trust of the state of tions; address thy prayers to the throne of mercy, for my final perseverance. If ever thou findest the devil to approach me with his insidious assaults, beseech my God that He would prevent this danger in some sufficient manner, so that I may not be If by a Christian surprised unawares. instinct, I could be apprised of his move-ments, I would endeavour to collect all my resources and means of resistance, thus directing them towards the point of dan-

ger, where my enemy may be approaching. Do all in thy power for me, O Virgin Mother! Whenever and wherever there is danger, apprise me of it, that I may never fall asleep on the approach of my enemies, but always be found at my post, vigilant and prepared. If I chance to grow weary or remiss, do thou excite my activity and wakefulness. If I be found deficient in courage, supply me with for-titude and resolution. If I be apathetic, make me earnest and zealous. If I be lukewarm, make me ardent and vigorous. If I be discovered backsliding, hurry me forward, lest my ground be altogether lost. If my strength fail me, support me in the hour of conflict. Thus, when I am sustained, I will advance with confidence. When I am invigorated, I will the less easily yield to my adversary. When I am supplied with all those graces that are wanting, I will the less need those powerful arms of defence, for want of which I was found so miserably deficient. O Sacrament of Divine Love! O Heavenly Redeemer! how sweet and how abundant is not the plenitude of Thy graces, thus to fill me, and even to satiate me, with Thy delights! O,

how could I ever describe that peace of mind which I now feel! Not if I had the tongues of men and of angels. I burn-I am entirely consumed with the fire of Thy Divine love. O, Virgin Mother of God, pray for me, that I may never be found in a worse condition, than that in which I now feel placed, yet through no merit of my own. If I be in friendship with God, at this particular moment, may I always be animated with His love, as I trust I am at present. May I ever feel that peace of mind, and a pure happiness, in being considered one of His elect. This I most earnestly hope I am, and that I will continue so for all eternity. O, may I be yet seated in those heavenly mansions, in company with all the saints and angels, when joined with them in singing hymns of praise to my bounteous Saviour. O, gracious and Immaculate Lady, take me under thy protection, and secure me from all the follies and vanities of this sinful world. I shall ever honour thee-thou shalt be my best and chiefest patroness. My respect and veneration for thee shall only be second to that which I owe to God. In every danger will I invoke thy venerable name and beseech thee to intercede with thy blessed Son on my behalf. In trials and misfortune, thou wilt not neglect to succour me; and whenever thy presence may be found necessary, be pleased for my sake to become my special guardian. Assist me, and I shall be secure in thy patronage; withdraw thy succour, and I shall be placed in the greatest possible danger. Keep a watchful eye over me, O Blessed Lady, support thy weak and helpless child. Sustained by thy gracious intercession through the conflicts of this life, may I come hereafter to thee, and participate in the neverending joys of heaven, where thou reignest as Queen, for ever and ever. Amen.

ALL you blessed angels and saints of God, assist me by your prayers, that I may happily arrive with you in the port of everlasting security. O, may I achieve those honours and rewards you now enjoy, by my poverty of spirit, by chastity, by humility, by meekness, by self-denial, by mortification, and by alms deeds. Pray for me, that I may inherit and participate in your present and future prerogatives, that I

may be eternally happy with you when my earthly career shall close; that I may zealously endeavour to amend my life, and walk henceforth in the paths of virtue; that I may know and fulfil all the commandments of God and precepts of His Church, by observing which man may obtain the rewards of the just. May I follow in those ways of wisdom, which the saints on earth have pointed out for our example and imitation. O that I could fast and pray like you, or be vigilant as you were; that I could mortify and chastise my rebellious senses; that I could love God with the same burning desire; that I could preserve my soul carefully from sin, as you have already done. Pray for me, that this my communion may produce the same good effects in my soul, as the body and blood of Christ often pro-cured for you. It is well known, that in the lives of our most eminent saints, during the time intervening between one communion and another, this interval had been usually spent, partly in thanksgiving for the last, and partly in preparing for the next communion. O, that I could imitate such bright examples! I know that it

would be your delight, if I should profit by these admirable lessons. What is there to prevent me, but my own sloth and indolence? I will now endeavour to be more in earnest, for it is better to love thee even late than never. O, all ye holy apostles and evangelists, procure for me the fire of your love and zeal. O, ye holy disciples, obtain for me your meekness, patience, and obedience. O, ye holy martyrs and confessors, when shall ye holy martyrs and confessors, when shall I possess your courage and intrepidity, braving insults, injuries, racks, tortures, prisons, and persecutors, thus overcoming temptations and assaults of the devil? O, all ye holy fathers, and holy prophets, when shall I experience your love and faith, your constancy and heavenly desires? O, all ye thrones, powers, and dominions, intercede for me that I may yet have a rate of with your in that heavenly kingdom. place with you in that heavenly kingdom! This happiness it shall ever be my earnest wish to attain. I beseech my Lord for all these blessings, and through the help of your prayers I hope to secure them. *St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John, St. Joseph, St. James, pray for me, that I may obtain the grace of a happy death. Other favoured saints there are in heaven, beloved by the Almighty these I beg to intercede for me, and assis me by their prayers. O, my deares patron saint, (here name him or her) I beg of you to look down upon a poor trembling, and afflicted servant. Life up thy pure hands to God in my behalf Do not turn a deaf ear to these my en treaties, and most humble supplications but succour thy servant, so far as it lie within your power. I now purpose t continue ever steady in that way which leads to heaven. I will persevere in grad and good works, that at the second com ing of my Redeemer, I may receive from Him a favourable sentence. Amen.

A Prayer to our Special Patron, and that Saint who is chief Patron of or nation and diocese.

O BLESSED Saint N. N. (mention his or her whose name you bear in Baptis or Confirmation, or whoever is the patrosaint of the nation or diocese to which you belong) hear my prayer, and regard n spiritual necessities, in common with the

of my fellow-countrymen, your special clients. By thy efficacious prayers, support me in time of need, and beseech your God and mine, to assist me with His holy graces. O all you holy saints of this nation and diocese, extend your pure hands towards God for me. Entreat Him to bestow His mercies on me, and upon all His creatures. With thee do I most earnestly desire, that He may exalt His holy Church over Paganism, Idolatry, Heresy, and Infidelity, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord and Blessed Redeemer. Amen.

A Prayer to our Guardian Angel.

HOLY Angel Guardian, to whose care and protection God in His mercy hath committed me, grant that I may ever follow thy guidance, as I know thou wouldst labour for my spiritual good, and lead me in the right paths. Grant, that as I have been preserved so long by thee, through dangers, difficulties, trials and temptations, I may still, under the banner of thy protection, improve in virtue, goodness, and the practice of perfection. Keep me from the allurements

of pleasure—from the paths of vice and corruption—from the precipice of destruction—from tepidity, sloth, immodesty, covetousness, envy, and the like vices. Draw me with thyself to the goal of truth and holiness—to the practice of virtue and good works—to the attainment of peace and rest everlasting. Do all this for me, through thy aid and intercession, and I shall be ever preserved under thy guidance. I will become one of God's chosen creatures here, and rejoice with the happy company of heaven, when called away from this life. Amen.

ON THE HOLY VIATIGUM AND EXTREME UNCTION.

There is an obligation imposed on each Catholic of sufficient age and duly instructed, to receive the Holy Eucharist, when at the point of death, or when his illness is of such a nature as would be likely to prove fatal. This requirement is binding under pain of mortal sin. But in such cases, the faithful are not obliged to

receive it fasting; bodily weakness, which usually intervenes at this juncture, rendering such observance unnecessary. Holy Communion is then said to be received by way of *Viaticum*, because it affords us a special refreshment for our souls, as also provision against the efforts of our spiritual enemies, whenever it may please the Almighty to call us away from this world.

The opinion of theologians most probably received is, that even if a person had communicated, through devotion, only a few days before a dangerous illness; yet, owing to the peculiar effects and graces of Holy Viaticum, it would be exceedingly desirable to partake of this Blessed Sacrament when stretched on the bed of death. A greater difference of opinion seems to prevail, regarding the expediency of receiving Holy Viaticum on the same day, when a person may have regularly communicated in the morning, a dangerous illness having afterwards intervened. There should be a reasonable presumption, or little doubt entertained, that the patient can swallow Holy Communion, or that his stomach might retain

it, before a priest could administer the Blessed Sacrament. Certain persons are not allowed to communicate, such as those suffering from delirium, or a perpetual loss of reason.

The pastor and the parochial clergy having faculties for this purpose, become authorised ministers for dispensing Holy Viaticum to the sick. But only with the express leave of a pastor, any other approved priest, whether secular or regular, may officiate in his place; however, in a case of necessity, the pastor of a patient not being present, any priest is required to administer Holy Eucharist to a dying person, when sufficiently disposed for receiving it. This obligation arises from charity, and the necessity of assisting such person in his extremity, with a salutary and efficacious remedy; whilst the Church, in such case is reasonably supposed to supply the necessary jurisdiction.

When we or our friends are in danger of proximate or even more remote death by any sickness or accident occurring, it would always be advisable to consider and apply in due time this admonition of the

Apostle St. James:-"Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man; and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him." (v. 14, 15.) These words enjoin the reception of Extreme Unction in such a juncture; it being a Sacrament, which remits sins, which comforts the soul in her last agony, which restores even temporal health when God deems it expedient, and which always confers peculiar graces on the sick person worthily receiving it. Extreme Unction means the last anointing, and it implies an application of Holy Oil, blessed by the Bishop, to various parts of the body, with a form of words peculiar to each unction, which signifies and explains its spiritual effects. Although any priest can validly administer this Sacrament, by virtue of the power conferred on him at the time of his ordination; yet it must be observed, that only pastors having charge of souls can lawfully administer Extreme Unction to members of their flock. Re-

ligious who would administer this Sacrament, without permission of a pastor, incur by this very act a sentence of excommunication reserved to the Pope:* however if danger of death be imminent, any priest who happens to be present can anoint a sick person. † Extreme Unction is usually conferred immediately after Holy Viaticum has been received by the patient, when a pastor has been called in the beginning of his illness. The application of Extreme Unction extends however to a greater number, as to all children who have attained the use of reason. to temporally delirious persons, and to those deprived of their senses, when it may reasonably be presumed, they would desire its reception, if capable of exertheir former faculties; Viaticum can be given more frequently, whilst the same illness continues, to those who are prepared for obtaining its peculiar spiritual graces. Extreme Unction can be repeated, when a sick person has per-

v. Par. l. Act.

^{*} Ex Clementina 1. De Privilegiis. § 1. St. Ligouri, Theologia Moralis. Tomus vi. Tract. v. De Extrema Unctione, et Ordine. cap. 1. n. 722. † See St. Charles Borromeo, In Concilio Mediolan.

fectly recovered from a former dangerous illness or accident, and has again fallen into another like extremity; * but in one and the same infirmity, when he is exposed to similar danger of life, this Sacrament can only be once administered.† During the same infirmity, however, when a very sensible recovery from dangerous illness has occurred, with relapse into another critical state of health following, then would it be permitted to have recourse again to Extreme Unction.! Such are a few of the most necessary instructions, which may be prefixed to the following devotions, and which are applicable to the state of persons, when seriously ill.

A Prayer before receiving Holy Viaticum.

When stretched on your sick bed, and about to leave the vanities and deceits of this sinful world, turn your thoughts and affections to that sublime Being, who having formed and redeemed you, now requires an account

^{*} Concilium Tridentinum, Sess. xiv. cap. 3. De Extrema Unctione.

[†] See' Benedict xiv. De Synodo Diœces. Lib. viii. cap. 8. Also, Devoti, Institutionum Canonicarum, Libri iv. Tomus i. Lib. ii. Sect. v. § xcvi. De Extrema Unctione.

[†] Rituale Romanum. De Sacramento Extremæ Unctionis.

of your thoughts, words, and actions during life. Do not indulge in any vain hope of recovery, but look on this, as your last sickness. For otherwise you might be drawn from a worthy preparation for death, through a delusive hope of living. At this time, when the devil hopes to surprise a sick person, racked with bodily and mental anguish, he tries all wicked devices upon the soul, in order to wean her from God. He brings all the most wily stratagems to bear against the patient's spiritual welfare. Devoutly turn your attention to the religious preparation necessary for worthily communicating, during this, the most solemn moment of your existence. A short time hence, and you may be summoned to appear in the presence of your Creator and your Judge. Address your God, therefore, with humble piety and resignation, in the following terms.

DEAR Jesus, I adore Thee with my whole heart, I give Thee thanks for that infinite love which Thou hast shown to poor sinners, by dying for them on the cross, and for Thy unspeakable goodness dispensed to me in this heavenly banquet. Thou art now pleased to invite me for the last time, but how can I receive Thee, without remorse for my past sins, I who have so ungratefully offended Thee, and who have lived so unworthy of my profession?

I acknowledge, O my God, that I am a sinner, a poor, miserable sinner! Thou alone art my hope. To Thee I raise my eyes, to Thee who art so rich in mercy,

who art my advocate and most powerful mediator. I commit my cause into Thy hands, but judge me only in Thy mercy. Help me now in my distress, let Thy precious body and blood, that infinite ransom for my sins, supply all my deficiencies, whilst I partake of this sacred food. Thou knowest my weakness, Thou knowest my unworthiness, Thou seest how unprepared I am, through the multitude and enormity of my sins, to appear before Thy judgment seat. I should tremble at the approach of that dreadful hour, when my manifold transgressions shall be laid before me. What shall I do, then, O keeper of men! What must become of me, if the measure of my iniquities must decide my eternal destiny? O, my Divine Jesus, let me not fall into that abyss; come Thou into my soul, and befriend me at the dread tribunal. There let all Thy mercies plead for me, though I have no merits of my own.

Yet upon Thy infinite goodness I have

Yet upon Thy infinite goodness I have every reason to rely. Let us then, O my soul, most confidently recur to the mercies of our Lord; let us shelter ourselves under the protection of His most sacred wounds. There, although our sins may cry aloud for justice, His precious blood calls louder still for mercy. It is on this mercy I depend, on this I ground all my hopes. In this hope, I desire to die. Come, now, dearest Jesus, into my soul, and possess it for ever. Thou art my Lord and my God; behold, I am Thy servant! Give me understanding, and strengthen me, that I may ever conform to Thy holy will. Thou art the Lamb of God, that spetless Lamb, who taketh away the sins of the world. Take now from me all that is sinful, and give me that which will render me pleasing in Thy sight.

Thou art my love and my joy, my God and my all. Thou art my portion and inheritance; it is Thou who wilt restore my true possessions to me. Let the efficacious ardour of Thy love inflame my soul and affect all my faculties. Let Thy grace entirely change my heart, that for love of Thee I may die to the world. For love of me Thou wert pleased to die on the cross. Open Thy arms, O dearest Saviour, to receive Thy unworthy prodigal. Into Thy hands I commit myself, O Lord; my spirit yearns for Thee. The poor remainder of my life I resign to Thy safe

keeping. Whilst I am yet in possession of my senses, and have the power of making the offer and sacrifice, I only desire sweetly to repose in the bosom of my Divine Saviour. Grant me this grace, sweet Jesus. Amen.

A Prayer after Holy Viaticum.

When the Priest has administered this Holy Sacrament with or without Extmene Unction, endeavour piously to reflect on the spiritual advantages conferred on you. After some moments spent in silent and profound meditation, the following prayer may be recited.

CLORY, praise, and thanksgiving to Thee, O Lord, who in Thy sweetness hast been pleased to visit, and to refresh my poor soul. Now, let Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word. Now, Thou art come to me, O my Divine Redeemer, I will not let Thee go. Now I can willingly bid farewell to this world, and with joy I go to Thee, O my God. Nothing more, O dear Jesus, nothing

Nothing more, O dear Jesus, nothing in life shall separate me from Thee. Now I am truly united with Thee. In Thee will I live, in Thee I will die, and with Thee I hope to abide for ever. Now, life itself seems wearisome to me; I desire to

be dissolved, and be with Christ. Jesus is my life, and to die will be my gain.

Now, I will fear no evils, though I walk in the shadow of death, because Thou art with me, O Lord. As the hart pants after the fountains of living water, so does my soul pant for Thee. My fainting spirit desires refreshment and rest! O, when shall I come and appear before the

face of my God?

Give me Thy blessing, O sweet Jesus, and establish my soul in everlasting peace; such peace as only Thou canst give; such peace as it may not be within the power of my enemy to destroy. O, that I were happily united to Thee for ever! O, that I were wholly absorbed in Thy love, and buried in the sleep of death, that my soul may be at rest, in the possession of everlasting happiness, and in the enjoyment of Thee, O my God.

What have I more to do with this world? And in heaven, what have I to

desire but Thee, O my God?

I am here this moment, and the next, perhaps, will be launched out upon the broad ocean of eternity. After being now feasted with Thy heavenly food, good

Jesus, may I appear with confidence, before Thy dread tribunal, and await the verdict of a merciful Judge. On Thy mercy I place my chief reliance, and I hope for Thy pity towards a sinful, but penitent wretch. I resign all my worldly goods and effects, which I now hold, into Thy hands. From Thee I received them, and to me they are of no farther value, only give me those possessions which the blessed in heaven so dearly prize! Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, receive my soul, O my sweet Jesus! In Thee may I rest, and thus obtaining eternal happiness, rejoice, world without end. Amen.

The patient, or when he is unable to do so, his friends might be engaged most profitably, in offering up prayers and Litanies for the sick, or other suitable devotions, during various intervals of his illness. It would always be desirable, to make in sufficient time a just testamentary disposal of temporal possessions and matters, so that the mind of a patient may be at more perfect liberty to become wholly engrossed with spiritual interests, at the near approach of Death.

A Resolution of Amendment and for Perseverance in the State of Grace.

Propose to dedicate all your future actions and desires to God, beseeching Him to moderate and direct them, as He should deem expedient. Resolve to forsake all sin and the occasions of it; to attend solely to His will, and to be animated only with the intention of doing it. Determine with yourself, to approach more frequently to this holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Resolve, if possible, to attend Mass each day; to perform some good works, or to spend some considerable portion of time in prayer and spiritual reading. Beg of the Lord, to strengthen you in the performance of these resolutions, and resign yourself in all things to His holy will.

SECT. I.

MY Lord God, my Creator, my Redeemer, and my preserver, I am ready, and at a moment's warning I will be willing to follow wheresoever Thou shalt direct me. Take me and all I now have, or shall hereafter possess, to Thyself-I surrender all to Thee who gavest all-I resign all pretension to dispose of what I know belongs to Thee. Give me no other treasure but Thyself in exchange: I desire nothing more. Thou art inestimable and precious: I am worthless and insignificant. Wherefore then should I hesitate to make this proposal, which must prove so advantageous to me? Poverty and weakness exchanged for riches and strength: Thou also assenting to this arrangement. O Lord God, Thou art incomprehensibly good, and I am most wretched and sinful. Thou art wise and all-powerful; I am foolish and weak. Thou art great and illustrious; I am vile and worthless. I present Thee, O Lord, all that I can offer to Thee; Thou knowest that I have nothing more to give; accept my humble service and my best affections. Thou wilt not expect more than these. I direct all my future actions to Thee; let them be performed only as Thou pleasest, and I shall be satisfied with Thy holy disposition. Whatsoever word I speak, or action I perform, or thought which occurs to my mind, henceforth may they be directed, as Thou wouldst desire. Guide them by Thy providence, and direct them in such a manner, that they may be worthy of Thy approval, and thus obtain the rewards of Thy heavenly kingdom, where I hope to arrive, when Thou shalt be pleased to call me away from this my state of mortal servitude. I now resolve, that my tongue whenever employed, may always pro-nounce Thy praise—that all my actions may promote the honour of God and the salvation of my own soul—and that all my thoughts may be employed in con-

sidering Thy law and commandments, whilst forming good resolutions to practise these holy precepts. I shall cautiously these holy precepts. I shall cautiously endeavour to avoid every sin, and all the occasions of it. Whenever I am tempted by sinful allurements, do Thou, O Lord, put Thy hand before me, and restrain me—whenever my mind would be led astray by irregularity, do Thou inspire me with just notions of Thee, and of Thy delights—whenever I manifest the least inclination to rebel against Thy just decrees, do Thou restrain my evil purpose, and restrict my sinful wishes, with that force which will overcome evil by good practices.

SECT. 11.

O Lord, Thy grace is necessary for me, and therefore do not refuse it to me. If Thou wilt not afford it, when assailed by my spiritual adversaries, I know most assuredly that I will eventually fail. O Lord, look to the distresses of Thy servant, and as Thou hadst compassion on him before, Thou wilt not be unmoved at his present necessities. I will henceforth do Thy holy will in all things, and be solely influenced by Thy Divine Providence. I will persevere in good works and prayer to the end. Assisted by Thy holy grace, I will consistently strive against the bent of my own evil inclina-tions. Wherever I think Thy honour and glory concerned, in any object or work, I will zealously strive to promote them, and wheresoever I find any temptathem, and wheresoever I find any temptations of the devil likely to assail me, I will most studiously endeavour to avoid them. Thus, O Lord, Thy wishes shall be ever uppermost in my thoughts, and whatever I rightly judge contrary to Thy holy will must be regarded as unbecoming a Christian's life. Strengthen these my inclinations—confirm my decirce and retifer my resolution. sires—and ratify my resolution. I am Thine now, and Thine I hope for ever! O my Lord! most tender and most sweet! Would that I could pour forth in words the depth of my affection and my sincere love for Thee. No praise can be sufficiently exalted in terms, or meaning, when addressed to Thee. I have tasted now the sweets of Thy presence. I know by delightful experience what it is to

possess Thee. I have received Thy pricious body, which is a benefit by much greater than all Thy choicest benefits, as Thou Thyself art above deprave ignorant, benighted mortals, and all other created objects in the universe. Whenever I want to think upon Thy excessing goodness to me, I have only to refer this Holy Communion, and to my knowledge of what Thou art, and what The hast always been to me.

Now that I really know what, and he great Thou art, I will approach the Blessed Sacrament much more frequent than before—I will prepare as well I can, for Thy proper reception. I we furnish an apartment, in the most suitable manner possible—I will receive The into my house—I will provide ever thing for Thy delectation, to induce The to tarry with me. I will attend more carefully to my deportment and manner that in some measure, I may be though worthy of becoming Thy entertained These efforts I promise to make, and the

resolves I will steadily perform, with the help of Thy Divine Grace. If I cannot receive Thee as frequently as I could desire, if possible I shall attend daily at Mass, and be present at the oblation of this Holy Victim, when I hope to obtain at least some graces, even by an humble participation in these Divine Mysteries. I will engage to be more punctual in the performance of my several religious duties, -I will spend more time at my prayers, meditation, and spiritual reading, -I will exercise mortification, alms-deeds, and other works, acceptable to Thee—I will spend less time in idleness, in folly, in dress, in vanities, and in worldly amusements, that I may be able to please Thee, as in duty bound. Strengthen these my resolutions, O my God, and help me in the performance of them, that I may ever remain Thy faithful servant—that I may persevere to the end of my days, and hereafter come to a participation of Thy delights, in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

Do not confine yourself to these prayers alone; but if you have time or opportunity, in the course of the day on which you receive, or the days immediately succeeding, repeat whatsoever practices you think appropriate to the occasion, from some approved Manual of devotion or book of piety. Observe a becoming reserve in all your thoughts, words and actions, for several days after Communion, and take care to be more regular and strict in all religious duties for the future, than you had been during the time passed. If you are tempted to sin, pray fervently that you may not yield to it, but with reliance on God's grace, strive valiantly against the tempter. If you do so with earnestness and perseverance, you will assuredly succeed, and possibly prevent the Devil from a repetition of like dangerous assaults. Call to mind the good resolutions you have made, and the tender sentiments, with which you were inspired, on the day of your Communion. Beseech our Lord Jesus Christ, to bring these afresh to your mind, at every time, when the Devil assails you with his temptations. On the Day of Communion especially, withdraw your thoughts as far as you are able from all worldly concerns, and meditate only on the joys attending the eternal beatitude of God's saints in heaven. Endeavour to imitate their actions, and propose to take example from their lives. Address yourself to your patron saint and beg of him or her to assist you by charitable intercession, in achieving the great work of salvation, which you have now determined to commence in earnest. Increase all your good works daily, and constantly practice, according to your means and opportunities, meditation. alms-deeds. mortification and prayer.

THE END.

30 MA 67

RICHARDSON AND SON, PRINTERS, DERBY.

